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Origins & deadly missions

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Why the emperor abandoned his trusted battlefield tactics, but delivered a crushing victory over Russia in 1807

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Nazis' last stand in Zeeland

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Tribute to the Queen's fleet through the decades

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FUTURE
ISSUE 119

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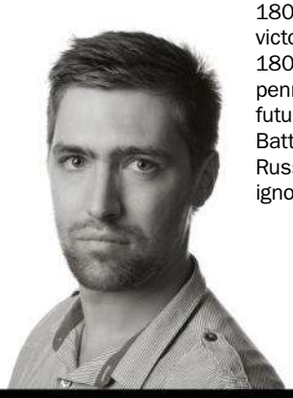
Welcome

Above: The Battle of Friedland saw Napoleon contradict his strict rules of warfare

One of the most successful and celebrated battlefield commanders, Napoleon Bonaparte was also a great student of warfare and counted Alexander the Great as the foremost leader in military history. By 1807, the emperor already had several exceptional campaigns and prestigious victorious battles to his name, with perhaps his greatest battle at Austerlitz in 1805 confirming his place among the best tacticians ever. Napoleon had even penned a long and detailed list of Military Maxims – unequivocal rules from which future generations could learn. This issue, Michael Stroud recounts how at the Battle of Friedland, Napoleon had the chance to bring the Tsar Alexander I's Russian Empire to heel, but how he almost squandered his chance at victory by ignoring his own rules of war.



Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

MAREK SOBIERALSKI

This month marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – the scene of some of the most horrific but also courageous actions of the Second World War. Marek reveals first-hand testimony of the uprising from Jewish and Polish resistance fighters (p40).

ALEX BOWERS

In the autumn of 1944 a month-long campaign was launched to oust the German occupiers from the Scheldt estuary, freeing the port of Antwerp and logistical lines for the invasion of Germany. Alex recounts the Battle of the Scheldt on page 32.

CRAIG MOORE

In this month's Operator's Handbook, Craig takes a look at the British variant of the M10 tank destroyer. Designated the 17-pounder SP Achilles, this design saw action in the Royal Artillery and Royal Canadian Artillery during the fierce Normandy Campaign (p62).

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WAR in FOCUS

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

1565-67

Painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Massacre of the Innocents* is a recasting of the Biblical killings ordered by King Herod. Bruegel transferred the scene from Judea to a wintry 16th century village in the Spanish Netherlands. Flemish villagers are graphically depicted being attacked by Spanish soldiers and German mercenaries. The painting is believed to be a commentary on the behaviour of Spanish soldiers in the build-up to the outbreak of a Dutch revolt against Spanish rule. This turned into the bloody Eighty Years' War.

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WAR in FOCUS

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN

3 October 1862

US President Abraham Lincoln meets Union Army officers, including General George B McClellan, near the battlefield of Antietam during the American Civil War. Fought on 17 September 1862, Antietam had been a costly Union victory against the Confederacy. Lincoln was disappointed with McClellan's performance, particularly when his general delayed following up the Union success. This photograph was taken at Mount Airy, Maryland, with the president seen conversing with McClellan and his staff. At 6ft 4in (193cm), Lincoln towered over his contemporaries.

© Alamy

WAR in FOCUS

MINE DETONATION

April 1943

An Allied soldier takes cover behind a scout car while a German Teller mine is detonated in Tunisia during the North African Campaign. Teller mines were anti-tank mines that were widely used by the Wehrmacht during the Second World War. Almost 3,700,000 were produced during 1943-44 alone and they were capable of destroying light armoured vehicles or blasting tracks off tanks. The mines were plate-shaped, which gave them the name of Teller, which is the German word for dish or plate.

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TIMELINE OF THE...

US NAVY SEALS

Founded during the Cold War, United States Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) teams have been conducting naval special forces operations across the world for over 60 years

VIETNAM WAR 04

Known as the 'Men with Green Faces' due to their facial camouflage, the SEALs see extensive action in Vietnam. They conduct ambushes, raids, reconnaissance missions and special intelligence operations with allies. They become a feared opponent of the Viet Cong.

1962-72

1941-45 | 1950-53 | 1 January 1962

US Marines observe an 8,000lb bomb being detonated by UDTs during the Battle of Peleliu in late 1944

WWII ORIGINS 01

US special forces naval warfare develops during the Second World War, beginning with Amphibious Scouts and Raiders. These further develop into Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDUs) – who fight on D-Day – and Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs). The UDTs see extensive action in the Pacific War.

KOREAN WAR 02

UDTs demonstrate their fighting versatility in Korea in actions such as the Inchon landings and Hungnam evacuation – where they detonate the largest non-nuclear explosion since the Second World War. These successes enable the UDTs to expand their capabilities.

Demolition charges destroy Hungnam port facilities and UN supplies, with USS Begor in the foreground

FOUNDATION 03

With rising American military intervention in Vietnam, President John F Kennedy increases military spending on US special forces. The US Navy SEALs are officially founded in early 1962 with two teams created from UDT personnel.

John F Kennedy delivers his State of the Union Address to a Joint Session of Congress, 11 January 1962

Three SEALs are awarded the Medal of Honor for courageous actions in Vietnam

MS Achille Lauro pictured in Port Said, Egypt, shortly after its hijackers leave the ship

ACHILLE LAURO HIJACKING 06

SEALs are sent to capture or kill Palestinian terrorists who hijack an Italian cruise ship in the Mediterranean Sea. The SEALs pursue the terrorists from the ship but cause an international standoff with Italy when the terrorists' escape aircraft lands in Sicily.

"SEALS ARE SENT TO CAPTURE OR KILL PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS WHO HIJACK AN ITALIAN CRUISE SHIP IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA"

1983 — **7-10 October 1985** — **20-23 December 1989**

INVASION OF GRENADA 05

Codenamed Operation Urgent Fury, the American invasion of the Caribbean island of Grenada sees the SEALs deployed in an internationally condemned action. SEALs suffer communications and intelligence problems but manage to rescue Grenada's governor-general from communist revolutionaries.

The SEALs rescue Governor-General Sir Paul Scoon (left), who becomes head of Grenada's provisional government following the American invasion

OPERATION NIFTY PACKAGE 07

During the American invasion of Panama, the SEALs launch an operation to prevent the escape of the country's dictator, Manuel Noriega. They sink Noriega's boat and destroy his jet but the dictator remains at large until he surrenders to American forces on 3 January 1990.

Manuel Noriega is escorted onto a USAF aircraft by agents from the US Drug Enforcement Administration, 3 January 1990

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

"TWO-DOZEN SEALS FLY INTO ABBOTTABAD, PAKISTAN, TO KILL OSAMA BIN LADEN, THE FOUNDER OF AL-QAEDA AND MASTERMIND OF THE 9/11 ATTACKS"
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OPERATION OCTAVE FUSION 13

1990-91

GULF WAR 08

The SEALs conduct reconnaissance along the Kuwaiti coastline before the war begins. During Operation Desert Storm they detonate explosives on the coast that deceives Iraqi forces into thinking a Coalition amphibious landing is imminent. This helps the main Coalition land operation.

A SEALs team circles the US Embassy compound in Kuwait City in an armoured dune buggy while US Marines secure the embassy grounds, 28 February 1991

11 September 2001-

WAR ON TERROR 09

In the aftermath of 9/11, the SEALs are deployed to conduct special forces operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Three Medals of Honor are awarded for actions in Afghanistan and another is awarded for extreme courage in Iraq.

SEALs search for al-Qaeda and Taliban forces during a Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) mission in Afghanistan's Jaji Mountains, 12 February 2002

28 June 2005

OPERATION RED WINGS 10

Eleven SEALs and eight American special forces airborne personnel are killed during an operation in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. It is the worst single-day death toll for US Navy special forces since the Second World War.

Navy SEALs pictured before they participate in Operation Red Wings, including posthumous Medal of Honor recipient Lieutenant Michael P Murphy (far right)

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE 14

SEALs continue to serve the United States, particularly as part of the international coalition to defeat the Islamic State (ISIS) – a militant group and former unrecognised quasi-state. The SEALs mainly advise and assist Iraqi and Kurdish military forces against ISIS.

Iraqi Army scouts pictured while undergoing weapons training by US Navy SEALs in Fallujah

OPERATION NEPTUNE SPEAR 12

Two-dozen SEALs fly into Abbottabad, Pakistan, to kill Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda and mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. During the 45-minute operation bin Laden is killed, with his body being buried at sea from USS Carl Vinson.

President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton watch the SEALs' progress in the White House Situation Room

Images © Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

12 April 2009 — 2 May 2011 — 25 January 2012 — 15 June 2014-

RESCUE OF CAPTAIN PHILLIPS 11

SEAL snipers from USS Bainbridge kill three Somali pirates aboard the lifeboat of American cargo ship MV Maersk Alabama. Their accurate marksmanship secures the rescue of Richard Phillips, the captain of merchant vessel.

USS Bainbridge tows MV Maersk Alabama's lifeboat to be processed for evidence after the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips, 13 April 2009

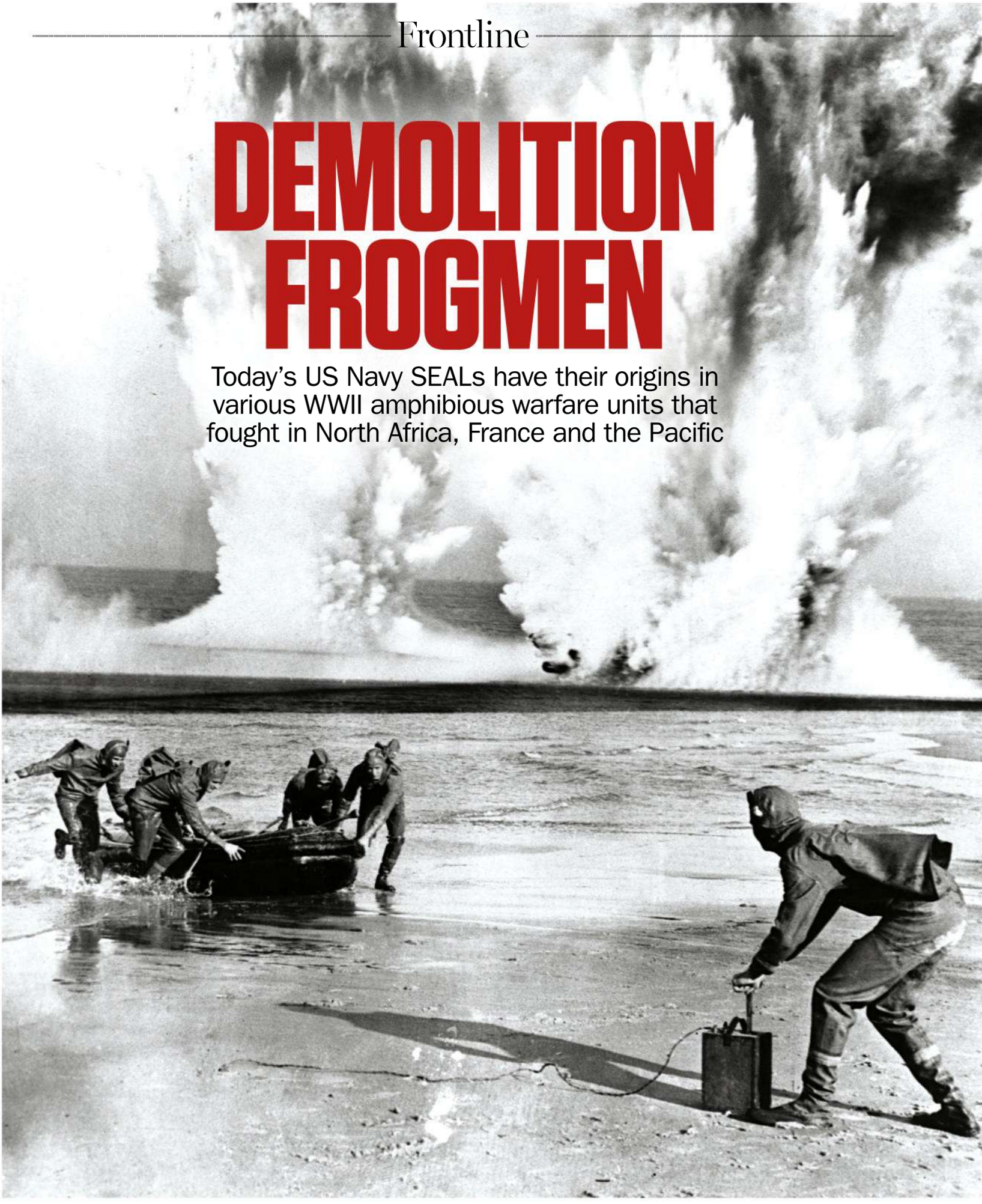
OPERATION OCTAVE FUSION 13

The same SEAL unit that killed Osama bin Laden rescues two kidnapped aid workers, Jessica Buchanan and Poul Hagen Thisted, from Somali pirates. The SEALs kill nine pirates while sustaining no casualties of their own.

SEALs pictured during water training at sunrise in Coronado, California, January 2012

DEMOLITION FROGMEN

Today's US Navy SEALs have their origins in various WWII amphibious warfare units that fought in North Africa, France and the Pacific



After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Hitler's subsequent declaration of war, the United States found itself fighting on two fronts: in Pacific Asia and Europe.

To prepare for these arduous campaigns, with the expectation that amphibious landings would certainly form part of the coming battles, the US Navy founded the Amphibious Training Base at Little Creek, Virginia, in August 1942. Two naval special forces units known as the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (S&R) were established to prepare for Operation Torch in North Africa. They were tasked to conduct beach reconnaissance and lead night assaults on landing beaches.

At the same time, Little Creek developed a specialised team under the Naval Demolition Project. Consisting of 19 men, including two officers, the team was made up of experienced naval frogmen who had trained in salvage diving. Their skills were expanded to include training in demolitions, rubber boat use, cable cutting and commando combat. For the rest of 1942 and into early 1943, these frogmen were known as the Special Mission Naval Demolition Unit (SMNDU).

From 6 June 1943, the S&R and SMDNU inspired the formation of the Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDUs) whose training school was established at Fort Pierce, Florida. Every NCDU team consisted of one officer and five sailors that would operate from a single boat. They paid particular attention to destroying submerged enemy beach obstacles. A majority of NCDU teams were deployed to the Pacific while the others were sent to the Mediterranean and Britain.

Torch and Overlord

Modern US Navy special forces received their baptism of fire during Operation Torch in November 1942. Conducted off the Atlantic coast of French Morocco, Torch saw the S&R launch kayaks at night from USS Barb, a Gato-class submarine. They were able to guide two American destroyers to favourable near-shore firing positions. This successful manoeuvre was achieved despite the S&R coming under heavy enemy fire, with all of their boat officers being awarded the Navy Cross.

Meanwhile, the SMDNU were tasked with removing a cable boom that blocked access to the River Wadi Sebou on the Moroccan coast. During 8-9 November 1942, the SMDNU came under heavy fire in an open boat but they succeeded in removing the cable. This allowed the destroyer USS Dallas to move upriver and fire on a Vichy French aerodrome. For their bravery, every member of the SMDNU was awarded the Navy Cross.

The success of the naval commandos during Torch and also during the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943 informed the US Navy's plans for Operation Overlord. The S&R conducted preliminary operations off the Normandy coast in May 1944 while on D-Day itself 34 NCDU units landed on Omaha and Utah Beaches.

On 6 June 1944, the NCDUs were required to perform demolitions on the beaches and fill gaps in assault teams where necessary. These highly dangerous tasks resulted in the NCDUs suffering a casualty rate of 52 percent on D-Day – the bloodiest single day in US Navy special warfare. Such was their courage that the NCDUs of Omaha Beach were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

Underwater Demolition Teams

The NCDUs would go on to participate in the Allied invasion of southern France in August 1944 but they would evolve most profoundly in the Pacific. From their training base in Hawaii, 30 officers and 150 enlisted men were formed into two Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs). Each UDT consisted of approximately 15 officers and 70 men, with their first actions being conducted in January 1944 as part of Operation Flintlock in the Marshall Islands.

"TRAINED IN RECONNAISSANCE AND DEMOLITIONS, THE UDTS PARTICIPATED IN THE ISLAND-HOPPING CAMPAIGNS THAT DOMINATED THE PACIFIC WAR"

Trained in reconnaissance and demolitions, the UDTs participated in the island-hopping campaigns that dominated the Pacific War. In the last nine months of the war, during December 1944 to August 1945, they were an integral part of amphibious operations against the Japanese. This included landings on Guam, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Borneo. Two UDTs would be awarded five Presidential Unit Citations for actions in the Pacific.

At Iwo Jima, 15 members of UDT 15 were killed aboard the destroyer USS Blessman when it was attacked by a Japanese bomber. Twenty-three members were also wounded in what was the largest loss of life suffered by a UDT during the war. At the later Battle of Okinawa (1 April-22 June 1945), the UDTs fought in their largest operation. Eight UDT units, comprising almost 1,000 men, reconnoitred Okinawa in hazardous conditions where they were required to clear debris while avoiding enemy traps. They also risked contracting hypothermia as they swam in cold waters.

When operations on Okinawa ended, the UDTs were sent home to California for an extensive period of training to prepare for the planned invasion of Japan. A UDT Flotilla was formed that became the largest naval special forces combat organisation in history. However, the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused Japan to surrender and the invasion plans were cancelled. UDTs would go on to fight in the Korean and Vietnam Wars but it was their Second World War experiences that laid the groundwork for the US Navy SEALs to be founded.

***Left:** UDT personnel train at Little Creek, Virginia, 23 July 1947*

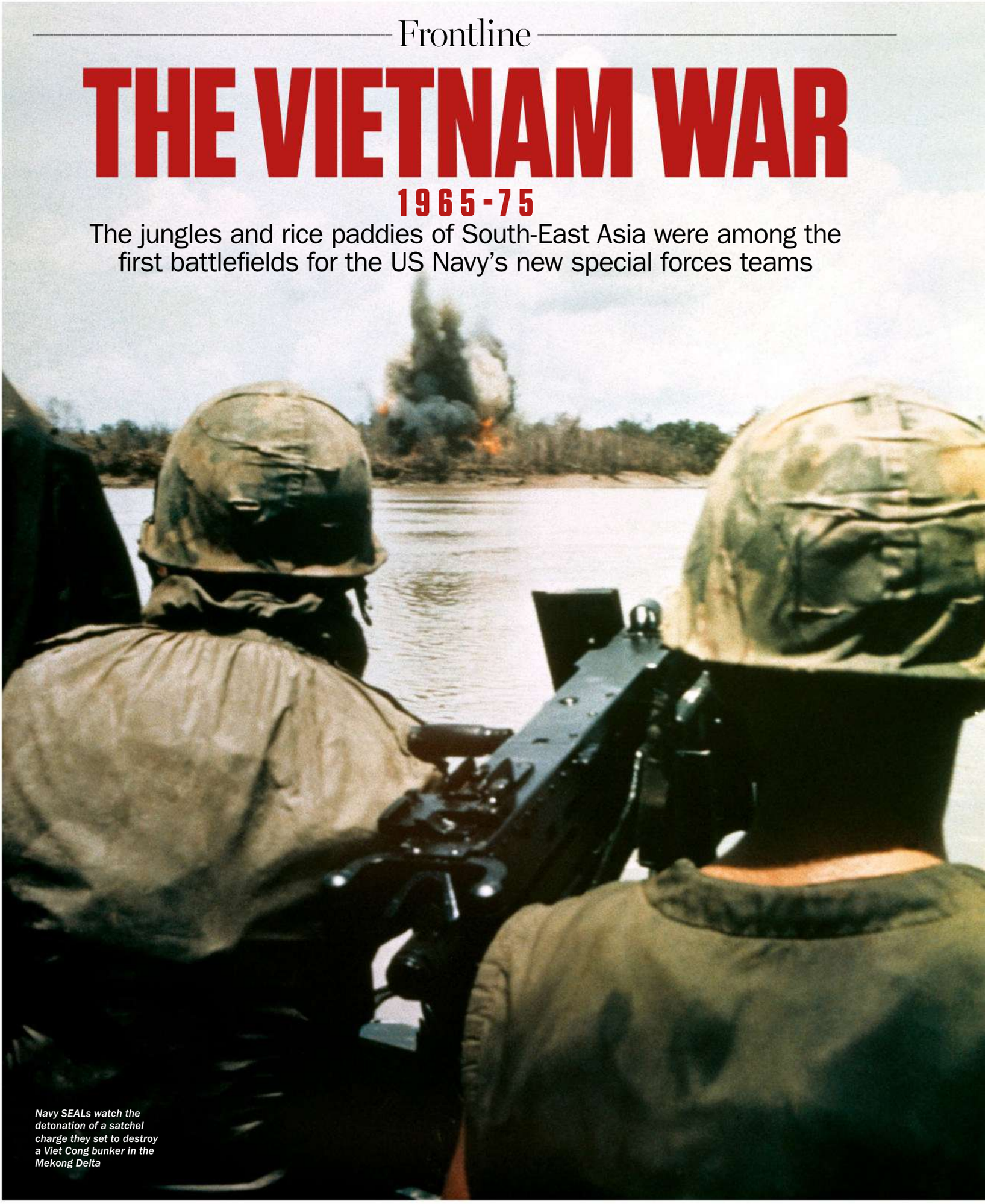
***Below:** UDT members use aluminium paint as camouflage during the Battle of Okinawa*

Images: Getty

THE VIETNAM WAR

1965-75

The jungles and rice paddies of South-East Asia were among the first battlefields for the US Navy's new special forces teams



Navy SEALs watch the detonation of a satchel charge they set to destroy a Viet Cong bunker in the Mekong Delta

The newly formed Navy SEALs were first sent into Vietnam in an advisory capacity in March 1962, just a few months after their inception. US military advisors had already been in the country from the mid-1950s, training the forces of the Western-leaning South Vietnamese government as they fought the communist-supported North. When America formally entered the conflict in 1965 after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) frogmen surveyed the beaches of Da Nang before the first US Marines set foot on the Vietnamese coast in March 1965.

After the swelling of the US military commitment into Vietnam, the Navy SEALs' role in the war widened to undertake active combat missions in the country against the Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army. However, the number of active SEALs was no greater than 120 at any given time due to the clandestine nature of their operation in the country. SEAL Teams 1 and 2 were the first to see action in Vietnam, with Team 1 starting their deployment in February 1967.

In 1969 the US Department of Defense released a film called *Men With Green Faces* – the first time the public were able to see SEAL team members doing their job. "If you really want exciting work come to a SEAL team," remarks a unnamed voice during the film. The men depicted in it have their faces coated in black and green camouflage paint and wear Tiger Stripe camouflage uniforms. This image of the SEALs depicted in the film is how the SEALs who fought in the conflict are remembered: small fireteams of covert operators sneaking in and out from under the enemy's noses.

The SEALs in Vietnam are also well remembered for wearing jeans while operating in the country. Mixing denim and camouflage patterns is an enduring image of the SEALs from the war, the reason being that while on operations the standard American-supplied jungle fatigues rotted away when exposed to water for long periods. Jeans were harder-wearing and dried a lot quicker.

As well as wearing denim the SEALs also used an eclectic mix of small arms during their combat operations, perhaps the most famous of which was the Stoner 63. Designed by Eugene Stoner as a replacement for the M16 that had been adopted en masse by the US military in the mid-60s, the modular rifle was turned down by the US Army for use but the SEALs saw the potential of an assault rifle-style weapon that could be fitted with a high-capacity box magazine.

The men also produced their own drum magazines for the Stoner 63 utilising captured magazines used by the Viet Cong in the RPD machine gun. Each man carrying a Stoner 63 in the field carried 500 rounds, which gave SEAL teams a large amount of firepower that could be put out by a small number of men. The light machine gun was used in Vietnam from as early as 1967. SEAL veteran Lieutenant Commander Michael J Walsh spoke of his admiration of the weapon in a 1994 video about the Stoner 63: "In those days, when I first saw the Stoner it was like nothing else around. It was different, it didn't look like anything else and if you had any weapons savvy at all you knew that right away that this was an awesome weapon."

Other small arms used by the SEALs included the M16 assault rifle, M3 submachine gun, silenced Sten guns and the XM177 carbines. Fireteams were inserted into their theatre of operation by Patrol Boats, River or their own Strike Assault Boats, known as STABs.

Legendary retired SEAL Rudy Boesch served in Vietnam with SEAL Team 2 between 1968 and 1970, and he described his experience of how the SEAL Teams operated within the military hierarchy in the 1995 book *Hunters & Shooters: An Oral History of the U.S. Navy SEALs in Vietnam*. "On our operations, we worked alone mostly or with the PRUs [Provincial Reconnaissance Units]," he recalled. "The South Vietnamese police—the White Mice—and the CIA would assist us with intel and interpreters. But that tour, we didn't work with any Army or Marine units. The Navy would support us with the PBRs [Patrol Boats, River], but my platoon didn't have the Seawolves supporting us much. When we had helicopter support it was usually an Army bird, either a slick for transport or a gunship for fire support. Rarely, we would operate alongside a larger unit."

The last active SEAL operators had left Vietnam by early 1973 as the United States wound down its involvement in the bitter conflict. Forty-eight SEALs were killed in action during the war.

A Navy SEAL on a search and destroy mission in the Mekong Delta, January 1969

"THE STONER 63 WAS DIFFERENT, IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING ELSE AND IF YOU HAD ANY WEAPONS SAVVY AT ALL YOU KNEW RIGHT WAY THIS WAS AN AWESOME WEAPON"

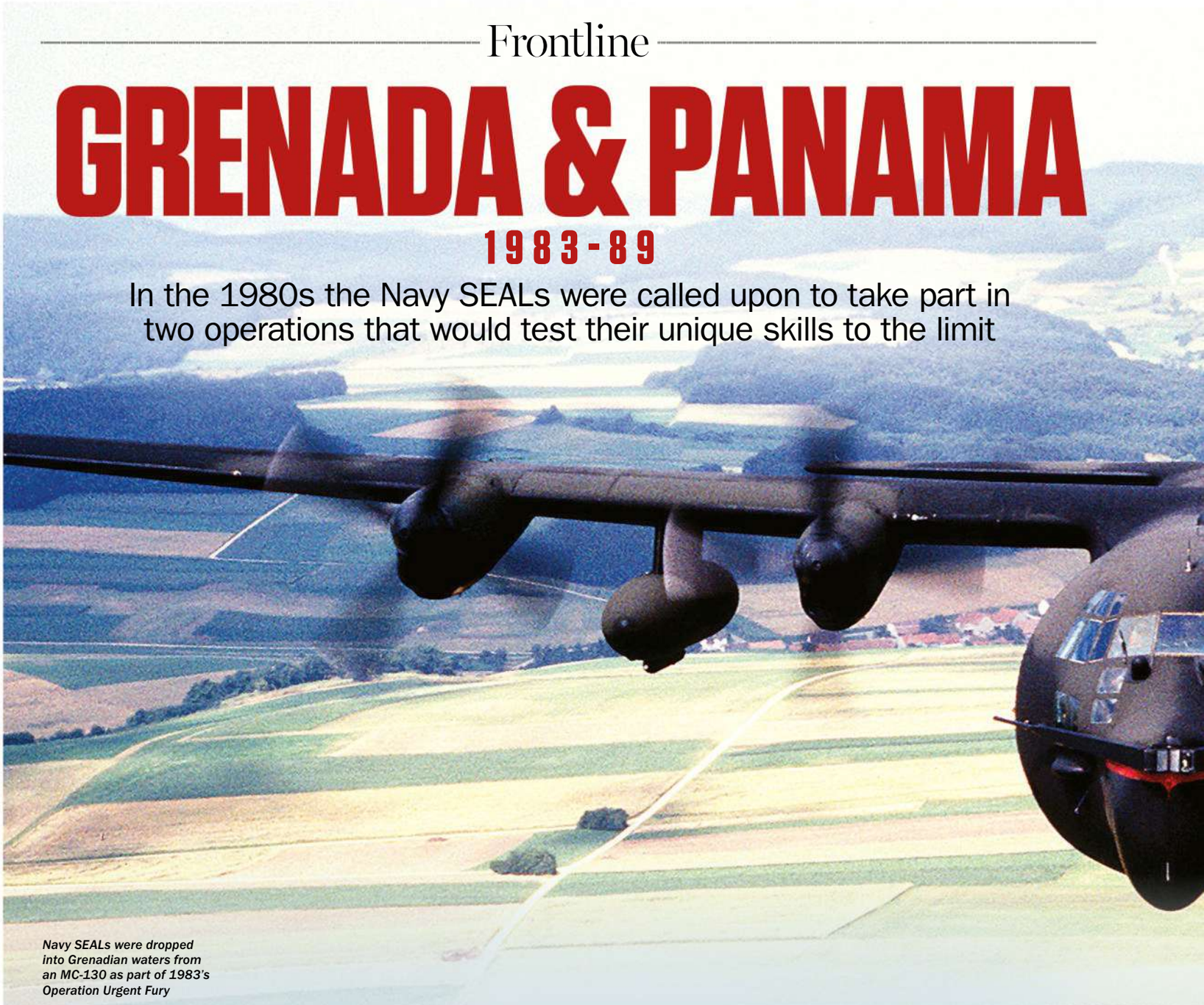
The Navy SEALs were first sent into Vietnam in an advisory capacity in March 1962

Images: Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

GRENADA & PANAMA

1983-89

In the 1980s the Navy SEALs were called upon to take part in two operations that would test their unique skills to the limit



Navy SEALs were dropped into Grenadian waters from an MC-130 as part of 1983's Operation Urgent Fury

On 25 October 1983, the US launched Operation Urgent Fury with the objective of overthrowing the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of the Caribbean island of Grenada. Earlier that month, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop had been killed by members of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) in a coup instigated by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard. The PRG had been in power since 1979 and had military support from Cuba, the Soviet Union, East Germany, North Korea and Syria.

The Navy SEALs were mobilised to provide reconnaissance ahead of the invasion and take part in raids on the island itself in conjunction with conventional land forces. However, the SEALs experience on the island would be fraught with problems. SEAL Team 6 attempted to get ashore on the southern tip of the island at Port Salines on the night of the 23rd. After a parachute jump directly into the sea from an MC-130 Combat Talon aircraft, the heavily laden SEALs soon got into trouble upon hitting the water and four men were lost. Other SEALs made it into their assault boats and linked up with USS Clifton Sprague; they tried again to go ashore the following night but were spotted by Grenadian patrols and abandoned their mission. The airborne troops they had meant to assist in capturing the airfield at the port did so with no prior reconnaissance being made.

Further inland, 23 men from SEAL Team 6 were tasked with rescuing Governor General Sir Paul Scoon, who was under house arrest at the British governor's residence. The SEALs were inserted by helicopter on the 25th and started to make their way to the house. Initially, the men were unable to find their objective and were soon under fire from PRA troops. When the SEALs found their objective, the police guarding the governor were swiftly dealt with and the SEALs tried to organise an extraction by helicopter, but the increasing enemy presence on the ground made this impossible. During this time the PRA had surrounded the complex and had brought up a Soviet BTR 60 personnel carrier. The SEALs carried no anti-tank weapons and were pinned down for almost 24 hours before US Marines broke through to them. In his 1995 book *Inside the Navy SEALs*, author Gary Stubblefield details how other SEAL operations on Grenada were more successful: "Not all of the SEAL operations screwed up,

A US Marine Corps helicopter hovers near a Soviet anti-aircraft gun during Operation Urgent Fury, October 1983

Members of SEAL Team 4 pictured before Operation Just Cause, 1989

"THE MISSION TO DESTROY THE GUNBOAT WAS THE FIRST UNDERWATER DEMOLITION UNDERTAKEN BY COMBAT DIVERS SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR"

one group performed their mission as advertised. They showed up, did their job the way it was supposed to be done, then stood down."

A second notable operation was undertaken by the SEALs in 1989 as part of Operation Just Cause in Panama. The country's leader, Manuel Noriega, was wanted by the US authorities for drug trafficking and other offences, and the mission to depose him started on 20 December. The SEALs of Task Force White had serval missions to complete, the most important of which were to disable Noriega's presidential jet at Paitilla Airport and his gunboat the Presidente Porras to deny Noriega a means of escape during Just Cause. The mission to destroy the gunboat was the first underwater demolition undertaken by combat divers since the Second World War. A member of the team who took part on the dive recalled his actions in Joel Nadel's book *Special Men and Special Missions*: "We successfully completed infiltration to the target and sucked our charges to the hull and continued on to the extraction location. At exactly 0100hrs on December 20th, the charges detonated and the vessel sank beneath the waters of Balboa Harbour."

The mission to destroy Noriega's Jet at the airport was made up of 48 SEALs of SEAL Team 4. The men were dropped at the southern end of the airfield by assault boat just after midnight on the 20th and made their way up the runway to the hangers to find the jet, disable it and deny the use of the runway to other aircraft.

Lightly armed with just a few anti-tank launchers, the SEALs had not expected heavy resistance from the Panamanian troops guarding the airport. But as the men moved into positions in front of the hanger containing the jet, three Panamanian armoured cars were spotted moving towards the SEALs. To counter them a team of SEALs positioned to the north of the airfield, led by Lieutenant John Connors, was sent to intercept the enemy before they encountered the SEALs at the hanger. As they moved to do so a guard saw them and opened fire on the SEALs, who were out in the open. During the ensuing fire fight four SEALs were killed and nine wounded. Connors was among the casualties, but despite the losses the mission was a success, with Noriega's jet being destroyed by an anti-tank rocket. On 3 January 1990 Noriega surrendered to American forces, ending the operation.

Images: Alamy, Getty

THE WAR ON TERROR

2001 – PRESENT DAY

After the 9/11 terror attacks, Navy SEAL teams were sent into Afghanistan in late 2001 to bring the groups responsible to justice

Members of Navy SEAL Team 5 pictured during a training exercise in the desert

"HE CONTINUED TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY UNTIL HE WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED, GALLANTLY GIVING HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY AND FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM"

In the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks, US President George W Bush addressed Congress on the 20th and declared a "war on terror". He accused al-Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden of orchestrating the attacks and offered a five-point ultimatum to the Taliban to deal with the perpetrators. The United States Special Operation Command (USSOCOM) mobilised a number of special forces units into the Gulf to start operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and among them was at least seven Navy SEAL platoons from SEAL Teams 2, 3 and 8.

The SEALs purpose in the region was to disrupt the day-to-day operations of al-Qaeda, collecting intelligence and searching cave complexes for supplies and weapons caches. In January 2002 a cave complex in Zhawar Kili close to the Pakistani border was discovered to contain huge quantities of ammunition and equipment, and SEALs were supported by US Marines in exploring and securing the caves. During their search they uncovered classrooms, living quarters and a hospital, the caves similar to the tunnel systems used by the Viet Cong in Vietnam. As well as recon and search-and-destroy missions, SEALs were also involved in a series of pitched battles during the fight against terrorism, known as Operation Enduring Freedom.

The most well-known is the Battle of Takur Ghar on 4 March 2002. At around 3am a Chinook helicopter attempted to insert a SEAL team so they could observe terrorist activity in the valleys below the mountain. Upon making its descent an RPG was fired at the Chinook, and 32-year-old SEAL Neil C Roberts fell 15ft (4.5m) from the ramp of the helicopter. His Silver Star citation details his actions: "He immediately manoeuvred to establish a defensive position and make contact with rescue forces. He defiantly fought the overwhelming enemy forces, undoubtedly causing significant tolls to their numbers. Surrounded by superior fire power, he died on the battlefield from fatal combat wounds. Petty Officer Roberts' bold leadership, wise judgment, and complete dedication to duty reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service." Roberts was the first SEAL to be killed in Afghanistan.

The action to rescue him was recorded by a Predator drone. Its footage showed the Medal of Honor-winning exploits of US Air Force Sergeant John Allan Chapman, who volunteered as part of a quick-reaction force (QRF) to try and rescue Roberts. Chapman was killed while attacking enemy troops, his bravery saving the lives of the rest of the QRF team. It remains the only Medal of Honor action in American military history to be fully recorded.

SEAL Lieutenant Michael P Murphy would earn a Medal of Honor during Operation Red Wings on 28 June 2005 in Kunar Province. His four-man reconnaissance team were tasked with surveying the location of Ahmad Shah, a Taliban commander, but during their operation a group of goat herders discovered the team. After talking to the men they let them go, but they then told local Taliban members of the SEALs' location. Murphy's medal citation from 22 October 2007 describes what happened…

"Lieutenant Murphy's team was discovered by anti-coalition militia sympathisers, who revealed their position to Taliban fighters. As a result, between 30 and 40 enemy fighters besieged his four-member team. Demonstrating exceptional resolve, the ensuing fierce fire fight resulted in numerous enemy casualties, as well as the wounding of all four members of the team. Ignoring his own wounds and demonstrating exceptional composure, Lieutenant Murphy continued to lead and encourage his men. When the primary communicator fell mortally wounded, Lieutenant Murphy repeatedly attempted to call for assistance for his beleaguered teammates. Realising the impossibility of communicating in the extreme terrain, and in the face of almost certain death, he fought his way into open terrain to gain a better position to transmit a call. This deliberate, heroic act deprived him of cover, exposing him to direct enemy fire. Finally achieving contact with his headquarters, Lieutenant Murphy maintained his exposed position while he provided his location and requested immediate support for his team. In his final act of bravery, he continued to engage the enemy until he was mortally wounded, gallantly giving his life for his country and for the cause of freedom."

Almost 10 years after the 9/11 terror attacks 22 SEALs were involved in the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on 2 May 2011. The CIA-led operation, dubbed Neptune Spear, had started in 2002. Upon bin Laden's hideaway finally being located, an American intelligence officer reportedly told the SEALs: "We think we found Osama bin Laden, and your job is to kill him." The raid on the compound close to the Pakistan border with India took only 38 minutes to compete – the only casualty for the SEALs being one of their helicopters breaking down. President Barack Obama addressed the people of the United States declaring the raids success at 11.35pm that evening. The SEALs had at last finished the task they had started in 2001.

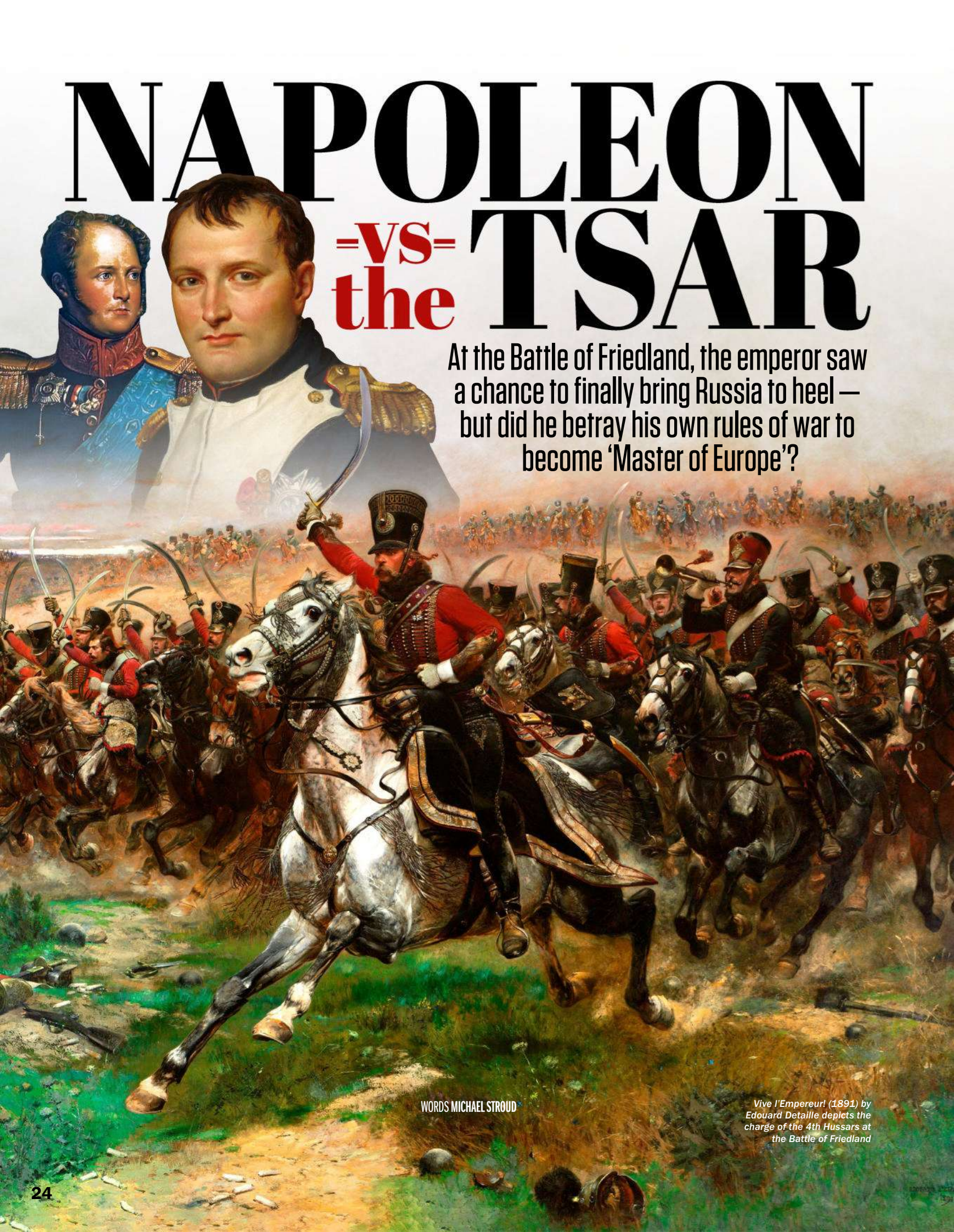
Navy SEALs at the entrance to an al-Qaeda cave complex in Zhawar Kili, Afghanistan, January 2002

Navy SEALs descend from a Seahawk onto the flight deck of the USS Enterprise, October 2001

Images: Getty

NAPOLEON =vs= the TSAR

At the Battle of Friedland, the emperor saw a chance to finally bring Russia to heel – but did he betray his own rules of war to become 'Master of Europe'?



WORDS **MICHAEL STROUD**

Vive l'Empereur! (1891) by Edouard Detaille depicts the charge of the 4th Hussars at the Battle of Friedland

The Battle of Eylau, in February 1807, had been a wintry bloodbath, proving to be little more than a Pyrrhic victory at best for the French. French casualties were as high as 25,000, and when compared to the enemy's 15,000 and their withdrawal from the field, Napoleon Bonaparte had been denied the most central tenet of his military maxims: a decisive battle. He had failed to knock the Russians out of the war by forcing them to the negotiating table, and would seek to remedy that before the end of the year.

Napoleon had one overriding objective after Eylau: the complete annihilation of General Levin August Bennigsen and his Russian army. To achieve this, he had to make the most of the winter months. Having taken up residence during this time at Finkenstein Palace just south of modern-day Susz, Poland, Napoleon set about creating a new army seemingly out of thin air to protect against potential incursion and refitting and reorganising his field forces for the coming campaign.

Looking to safeguard the heart of French territories and its holdings in Europe, Napoleon created the Army of Observation. This new army sprang to life by the stripping of French garrisons, which were backfilled with Allied troops, mass drafts from the Army of Italy and the strong-arming of Spain to provide over 18,000 troops to the new army.

"WAR SHOULD ONLY BE UNDERTAKEN WITH FORCES PROPORTIONED TO THE OBSTACLES TO BE OVERCOME"

Even the French conscripts were ordered to French training depots a year-and-a-half early to fill its ranks. General Guillaume Brune was given the most important command, that of the 60,000-strong centre in Germany, with the emperor's brother Jerome Bonaparte commanding the army's right flank in Silesia and Marshal Edouard Mortier commanding the left based in Pomerania – this constituted the newly created 100,000-strong Army of Observation.

The emperor then set new conscription standards, the highest since 1799, to replace the losses of his Grand Armée, beginning with the drafting of 100,000 Frenchmen. During the same time, French allies were tasked to do their part, including Italy, Westphalia and Holland, who would all contribute fresh contingents of troops. The influx of new troops and the recall of the sick and wounded back to France boosted French morale and swelled the Grand Armée in Poland to over 200,000. The refit and refresh were further enhanced by Napoleon's veterans being provided more rest and better food, while the cavalry arm received hordes of fresh and better-quality horses. By spring 1807 the emperor was ready to finish off the Russians.

The Russians were not idle during this same period, bolstering their forces with fresh troops and supplies. This inflated Bennigsen's army to nearly 110,000, consisting of 87,000 infantry, 11,000 cavalry and roughly 8,000 Cossacks. An additional 20,000 (mostly the Prussian contingent under Anton-Wilhelm von Lestocq) had been tasked with keeping the pressure on the French and their efforts at the strategically important Königsberg. The main Russian army had planned to maximise its refit by attacking across the Passarge River to scatter the French army before it could coalesce and consolidate, but this action fell apart by 5 June 1807 due to poor communications and personality conflicts between Bennigsen and the aggressively impatient Lestocq. This

Napoleon at the Battle of Friedland. His Military Maxims guided his methods of warfare but he did not always follow them

Images: Alamy, Getty

failure forced Bennigsen and the main Russian army to move north, keeping the Alle River between him and the French, while Lestocq and his Prussians took up position just outside Königsberg.

Lestocq, the son of a Prussian officer, gave hope to the Prussian war effort with his performance at the blizzard battle that was Eylau, where he served under Gerhard von Scharnhorst. It was at Eylau where Lestocq led the last operational Prussian unit that both defended against Michel Ney and, more decisively, struck Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout's spent French troops, throwing them back in disorder. This action earned Lestocq the Order of the Black Eagle, Prussia's highest decoration for chivalry, and solidified his commitment to continuing the fight against Napoleon and the French. He would continue to do so post-Eylau with his assignment to protect Königsberg.

After the frustrations of the Siege of Danzig and then the strategically inconclusive and costly Battle of Heilsberg on 10 June 1807, Napoleon reassessed and reaffirmed one of what would become part of his famous military maxims, Maxim V, which states:

"All wars should be governed by certain principles, for every war should have a definite object and be conducted according to the rules of art. War should only be undertaken with forces proportioned to the obstacles to be overcome."

Napoleon, while having tasted small victories over the Russians in early June, had yet to deliver the knock-out blow to the main Russian army. With the Russians seemingly in retreat toward what he thought was Königsberg, Napoleon saw his opportunity to make good on Maxim V. Ironically, he had become transfixed with the secondary objective of Königsberg itself as a large source of provisions for his army (which had been suffering great deprivations the further from France they campaigned) and as a location to deny the elderly Prussian-born commander Bennigsen and his retreating Russian troops.

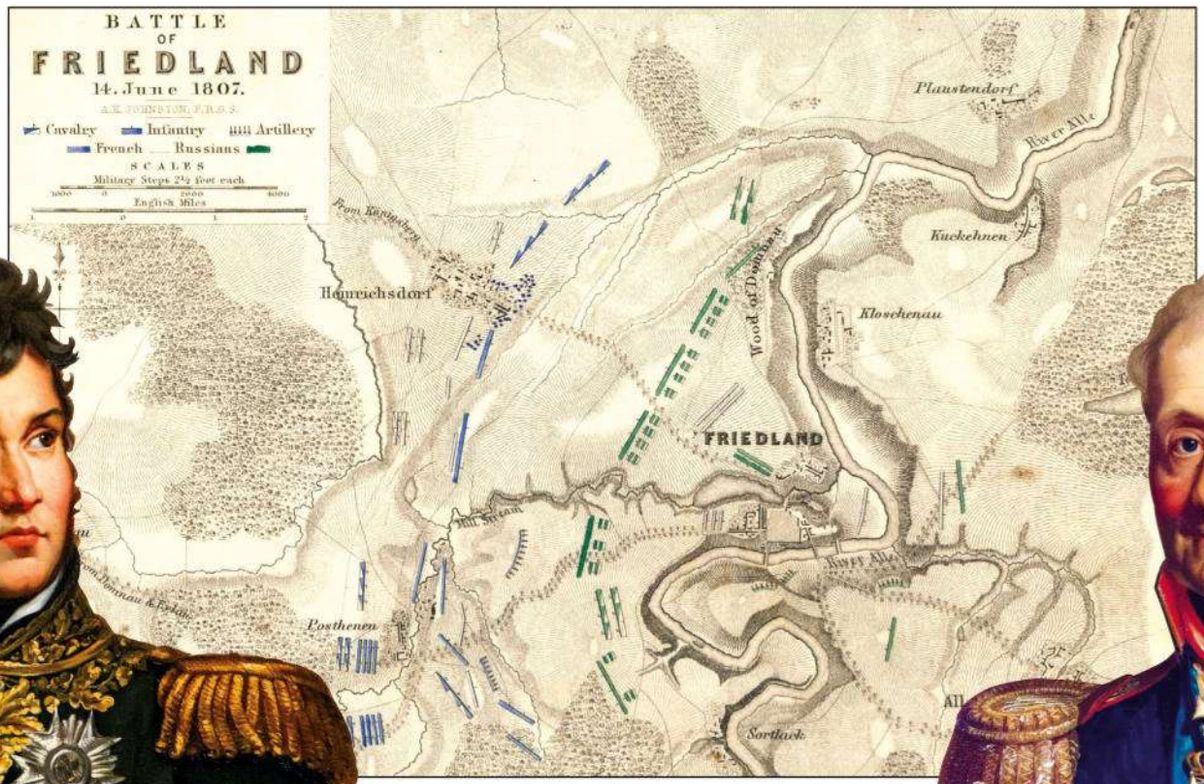
***Right:** Napoleon is depicted wearing a laurel wreath, and on the reverse as an ancient Greek warrior, to commemorate victory at Friedland*

Napoleon split his forces to both locate Bennigsen as well as to deny his securing of the vital supplies at Königsberg for the Russians. Peeling off two corps and nearly the entirety of the reserve cavalry under marshals Murat, Soult and Davout, creating an army of over 60,000, Napoleon said to his subordinates: "I expect you to be in Königsberg before midday tomorrow." The marshals clearly understood the emperor's orders and his focus on Königsberg and proceeded as ordered.

Meanwhile, the corps of marshals Victor, Ney, Mortier, and Lannes were between 30-50 miles (48-80km) behind, with Lannes' corps of up to around 17,000 (9,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry) being positioned on the army's extreme right and who were tasked with locating Bennigsen's Russian army. It would be the greatly outnumbered Lannes that would become first engaged with Bennigsen's 60,000 Russians at Friedland.

Friedland (which is Pravdinsk in Russia today) presented challenging topography for the Russians, who sought to cross the river and deal with Lannes' seemingly out-matched force of infantry, cavalry and some artillery and then cross back over. The winding River Alle, coupled with a lake and the narrow streets of the town itself, presented strong obstacles to the Russian plans for a quick strike, but Bennigsen was determined to bloody Napoleon and began crossing troops over on the night of 13 June.

Bennigsen deployed six divisions of his infantry in two lines, split with four to the north and two to the south,



***Left:** Marshal Lannes, who bore the full brunt of the Russian assault at Friedland until Napoleon's arrival with the French army*

***Right:** Levin August Bennigsen, Russian general and implacable enemy of Napoleon, who thought he'd outsmarted the French leader at Friedland*

KÖNIGSBERG CASTLE

The strategically important Königsberg Castle lay near the Pregel River and had served as a key port and access point to the Baltic Sea for hundreds of years by the time of the Napoleonic Wars. The Teutonic Knights constructed the first wooden fort and site in 1255, with the earliest renditions of the stone castle taking shape in 1257. It would be greatly expanded over the centuries, serving as a seat of power for the grand masters of the Teutonic Knights and then later for Prussian nobility.

The castle had a palace that was 274ft (83.5m) long, with a gothic-style tower of 300ft (91.4m) with nearly 300 steps to get to the top and an extensive library. The palace church of the castle would see Friedrich I crowned King of Prussia in 1701, and Königsberg itself would be the birthplace of philosopher Immanuel Kant.

By the time of the Napoleonic Wars, Königsberg's population had grown to 60,000, making it one of the most-populated German cities of the day and one which would serve as a refuge for King Friedrich Wilhelm III after the Prussian defeat at the Battle of Jena in 1806. From this point onward, Königsberg would serve as the centre of Prussian resistance to Napoleonic and French rule.

"ALL WARS SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY CERTAIN PRINCIPLES, FOR EVERY WAR SHOULD HAVE A DEFINITE OBJECT AND BE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF ART"

Napoleon's fixation with capturing the imposing fortification went against his principles of warfare and nearly led to disaster

Images: Alamy, Getty

with Russian engineers having constructed multiple wooden bridges across the Millstream to expedite lines of communication between the components of the army. The 8,000 Cossacks were deployed around Dambrau wood on the northern flank while 3,000 light infantry, with more in close support, held Sortlach Wood to the south. The large Russian force began hitting Lannes' overmatched force (nearly three-to-one) in the early morning hours of 14 June. However, Bennigsen's haphazard attacks allowed Lannes to tie them down and buy time for Napoleon and the arrival of the bulk of the French army.

Even after Lannes sent couriers to Napoleon informing the emperor of the Russian attack at the River Alle and around Friedland, Napoleon for a time was still fixated on the prize of Königsberg – ignoring his fifth maxim. However, reports continuously arrived that the main Russian army was arrayed against Lannes. Napoleon ordered Mortier and his corps to support Lannes at 9pm and then Ney at 10pm. It was only after confirmation from a personal observer, at around 2am on 14 June, that Napoleon acknowledged what was transpiring. Assembling the Guard, Victor's corps and the remaining three divisions of cavalry, the emperor finally set out to rescue Lannes and destroy the Russians. It would be 4am before Napoleon was underway and crossing the roughly 15 miles (24km) to Friedland.

By this time Lannes had been bearing the full brunt of Bennigsen's attacks for hours. Even with the arrival of units from Mortier and Ney by 10am, he was still outnumbered but doing his job and holding the Russians in place. Having deployed his infantry in a rough semi-circle formation and using the high wheat fields for concealment, with Marshal Grouchy's cavalry on the flanks, Lannes gave up little ground, taking full advantage of Friedland's narrow streets and local terrain to offset Russian numerical superiority.

Napoleon arrived by mid-afternoon on 14 June and, much to his surprise, realised the Russians had miscalculated by deploying their army west of the river, which now lay at their

Napoleon saluting the French cavalry that would prove vital in his success over the Russians at Friedland

back, effectively trapping themselves. Napoleon brought in the Imperial Guard and the rest of the 1st Corps by 4pm. Determining that he now had enough proportional force available to deliver a crushing blow and achieve his definitive objective, as outlined in Maxim V, Napoleon said to Lannes' messenger Baron de Marbot that he was "going to beat the Russians just as I beat the Austrians" and launched the unified French army at the enemy at 5:30pm, at the sounding of French gun batteries.

Napoleon had initially contradicted, or ignored, Maxim V early on by becoming enamoured with seizing Königsberg and only putting minor forces out as feelers for the main objective of the Russian field army. But he brought himself back in line once he verified the presence of the main Russian force, and then through speed of manoeuvre he amassed a proportional force large enough to decisively engage the enemy at Friedland.

The opportunities for martial glory were found throughout the engagement, as were those for taking the initiative that would greatly impact the engagement. The following, Maxim XV, was closely followed by Napoleon and the French, during the Battle of Friedland:

"The first consideration with a general who offers battle should be the glory and honour of his arms; the safety and preservation of his men is only the second; but it is in the enterprise and courage resulting from the former that the latter will most assuredly be found. In a retreat, besides the honour of the army, the loss of life is often greater than in two battles. For this reason, we should never despair while brave men are to be found with their colours. It is by this means we obtain victory and deserve to obtain it."

Napoleon assessed the precarious Russian positioning and the deployment of nearly an entire corps across the River Alle in an effort to destroy Lannes before French reinforcements arrived. With his enemy's backs against the river, and with French numbers swelling to outnumber them, the emperor

"IN A RETREAT, BESIDES THE HONOUR OF THE ARMY, THE LOSS OF LIFE IS OFTEN GREATER THAN IN TWO BATTLES...

...FOR THIS REASON, WE SHOULD NEVER DESPAIR WHILE BRAVE MEN ARE TO BE FOUND WITH THEIR COLOURS. IT IS BY THIS MEANS WE OBTAIN VICTORY AND DESERVE TO OBTAIN IT"

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Napoleon on the Battlefield of Eylau (1807) by Antoine-Jean Gros. The engagement was a bloody yet inconclusive affair

decided upon a tried-and-true tactic of the hammer and anvil. Here, the leaner French left flank engaged the Russians and Lannes continued to hold the centre (the anvil), while Ney and his VI Corps served as the hammer to hit the Russian left flank. Once the plan was in motion, it was the French centre that would live up to the Maxim XV by taking the initiative and seizing glory in the process. The Russians were soon compressed into an ever-tightening area as the flank attacks and fresh French cavalry drove their own cavalry back onto their infantry, causing chaos in the ranks.

It was at this moment that General Pierre Dupont of I Corps in the French centre and the artillery's General Alexandre Sénarmont took the initiative to move their forces forward to press the Russians. Sénarmont then displayed tactical acumen and battlefield initiative by pulling together more than 30 guns, ranging from 4-pounders to 12-pounders and howitzers, to form a massed battery. The battlefield was by now wreathed in smoke from the artillery, and he used this as cover. He then engaged the Russians at ever decreasing distances, starting at about 4,800ft (1,460m), then 'leapfrogging' forward, all the while pouring a constant barrage of fire into the Russian ranks. By the end, Sénarmont and his massed and mobile artillery would be within "60 paces of Bennigsen's infantry" and would account for the destruction of almost 4,000 Russians. This ultimately shattered the Russian left flank.

Ney at this point reformed his divisions from the pounding they'd received earlier when they had emerged from Sortlach Wood and were headed right for Friedland proper. Failed Russian counter-attacks including bayonet charges to stem the advance only resulted in more Russian casualties from French guns and from drowning in the river. Bennigsen now realised his tactical error and his quickly deteriorating situation, and ordered the Russian Imperial Guard forward to stem Ney's advance.

The march of the Russian Imperial Guard against Ney's troops was described by one witness as "a formation completely recruited from northern giants… the last and redoubtable hope of the great enemy army. It was a victory of pygmies over giants." The surrounding area was soon filled with the bodies of the guard, many with bayonet wounds reflecting the ferocious nature of the close-quarters hand-to-hand fighting.

Ney would see his troops in control of Friedland by around 8:30pm. This highlights the point of Maxim XXIX, a tenet of war for Napoleon that was interestingly neglected twice in the Battle of Friedland. Maxim XXIX simply states:

"When you have resolved to fight a battle, collect your whole force. Dispense with nothing. A single battalion sometimes decides the day."

Once it became clear that Lannes was engaged with a sizeable force of Russians early in the morning on 14 June at Friedland, Napoleon should have immediately marched his force as well as recalled those forces he'd dispatched to take Königsberg. By not adhering to his own war-fighting philosophy, he subjected Lannes' and his immensely outnumbered force to a severe yet unnecessary battering. Furthermore, Napoleon's stated main objective was to destroy Bennigsen's field army to force Tsar Alexander I to sue for peace on France's terms, but he became too focused on taking the fortress Königsberg and its supplies, which delayed his own arrival to Friedland and denied the use of nearly 60,000 troops in the battle itself.

The second way in which Napoleon didn't adhere to Maxim XXIX is that he missed the opportunity to truly finish off the Russians. After 8:30pm the Russians had lost Friedland and over 20,000 casualties and 80 guns (around 30 per cent of the Russian army), with Bennigsen working to stave off total disaster by calling a retreat out of the area under cover of their

***Right:** A Hussar officer during the time of the Napoleonic Wars*

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"WHEN YOU HAVE RESOLVED TO FIGHT A BATTLE, COLLECT YOUR WHOLE FORCE. DISPENSE WITH NOTHING"

artillery as well as up to 25 Russian squadrons of cavalry. The Russian escape was only made possible by the late discovery of one passable ford to the north of Friedland, as most of the bridges had been destroyed.

This should have been the moment when Napoleon ordered his 40 squadrons of cavalry to hit the retreating Russians, as Maxim XXIX clearly calls for battles to be fought with your entire force and to "dispense with nothing". Yet this did not happen, and Napoleon failed to send in the fresh Imperial Guard or unused divisions of the 1st Corps. He may have had political concerns which prevented him from annihilating the Russian army. He foresaw that such actions would have just strengthened the tsar's efforts to resist him and drag out the war, which would have forced Napoleon to invade Russia itself, which he did not want to do at the time (at least for several years). The irony here is that by not finishing off the Russian army, Napoleon contradicted his own martial philosophy contained in Maxim XXIX.

Nonetheless, at a cost of 8,000 French casualties Napoleon had finally dealt the Russians the blow that he had been searching for. After being prevented from linking up with the defenders at Königsberg, Bennigsen was forced to pull back further, which in turn forced Lestocq to abandon the sought-after prize of Königsberg, allowing the besieging French under Marshal Soult to lay claim to its supplies and vast stores. By 16 June, Napoleon had decimated the main Russian army, claimed the supply fortress of Königsberg and forced Tsar Alexander to the negotiating table.

The Russian and Prussian armies were ravaged, which left both Tsar Alexander and Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia to sue for peace with Napoleon, which he was happy to accommodate. The three sovereign leaders met on a raft in the middle of the Niemen River; the French and Russians met on the first day and the Prussians were forced to wait until two days later as an overt sign of humiliation. Napoleon effectively dictated terms to the two defeated monarchs in what became the Treaty of Tilsit, on 9 July 1807.

The terms of the treaty gave Napoleon effective control of northwest Europe, while forcing Prussia to give up control of all Polish territory, which would become the pro-French Duchy of Warsaw. Wilhelm also had to formally recognise the French-controlled kingdoms of Naples, Holland and Westphalia as well as the Confederation of the Rhine. Additionally, Prussia was forced to endure French occupation and pay an immense and crippling war indemnity of over 140 million francs, thereby completing Wilhelm's shame.

The Russians for their part were treated with far more equity by the French victors and were required to agree to an alliance with Napoleon against the British, while formally recognising the newly created state of the Duchy of Warsaw. Upon their meeting, the tsar was reported to have mentioned his dislike of the English, which Napoleon replied: "If that is the case, then peace is already made."

The signing of the treaty marked Napoleon and the French army's farthest eastward endeavours and effectively dismantled the Fourth Coalition, leaving the British alone in their struggle against Napoleonic France. Napoleon had checked the Fourth Coalition's efforts to stop him, defeated and dismantled its components (sans one), secured favourable political agreements from the defeated, reinstituted the flawed Continental System, and reinforced the protection of the French homeland with a victory at Friedland that the emperor said was a "worthy sister of Marengo, Austerlitz and Jena".

Napoleon was very much a master of the battlefield because of his military maxims. Being human, however, was something that even he could not change and as such he would fall victim to whims, decisions and influences that would contradict his own war-fighting ethos. He would generally focus on Maxim V to always seek the decisive battle, both he and numerous subordinates would seize opportunities with Maxim XV, but would fall victim to inconsistency with Maxim XXIX. In the end, Napoleon laid out a series of martial maxims with which to conduct war and warfare but he did not always adhere to them himself, as at Friedland.

Images: Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

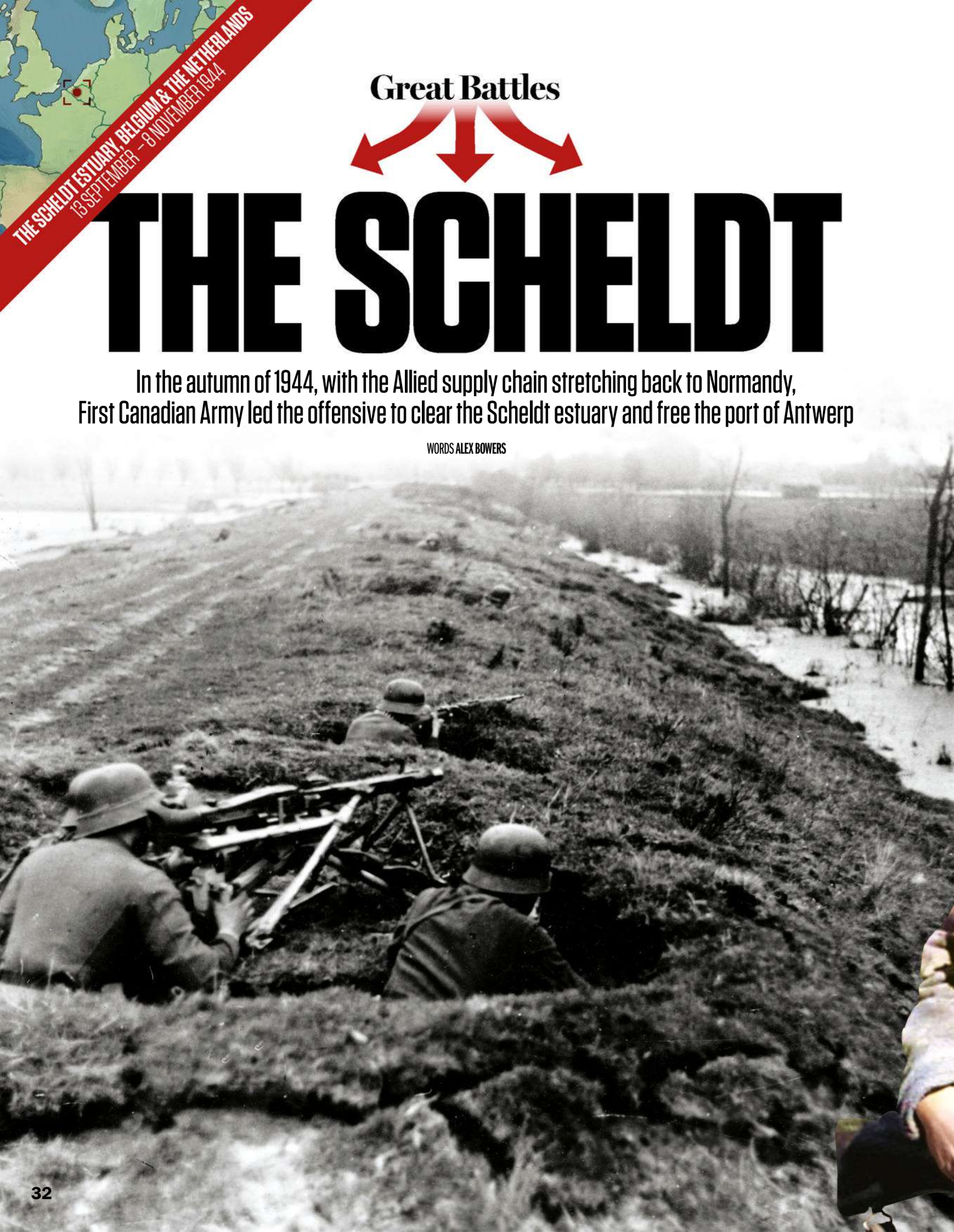
Victory at the Battle of Friedland meant Napoleon could dictate terms to Tsar Alexander I and Friedrich Wilhelm III at Tilsit

THE SCHELDT ESTUARY, BELGIUM & THE NETHERLANDS
13 SEPTEMBER – 8 NOVEMBER 1944

THE SCHELDT

In the autumn of 1944, with the Allied supply chain stretching back to Normandy, First Canadian Army led the offensive to clear the Scheldt estuary and free the port of Antwerp

WORDS **ALEX BOWERS**



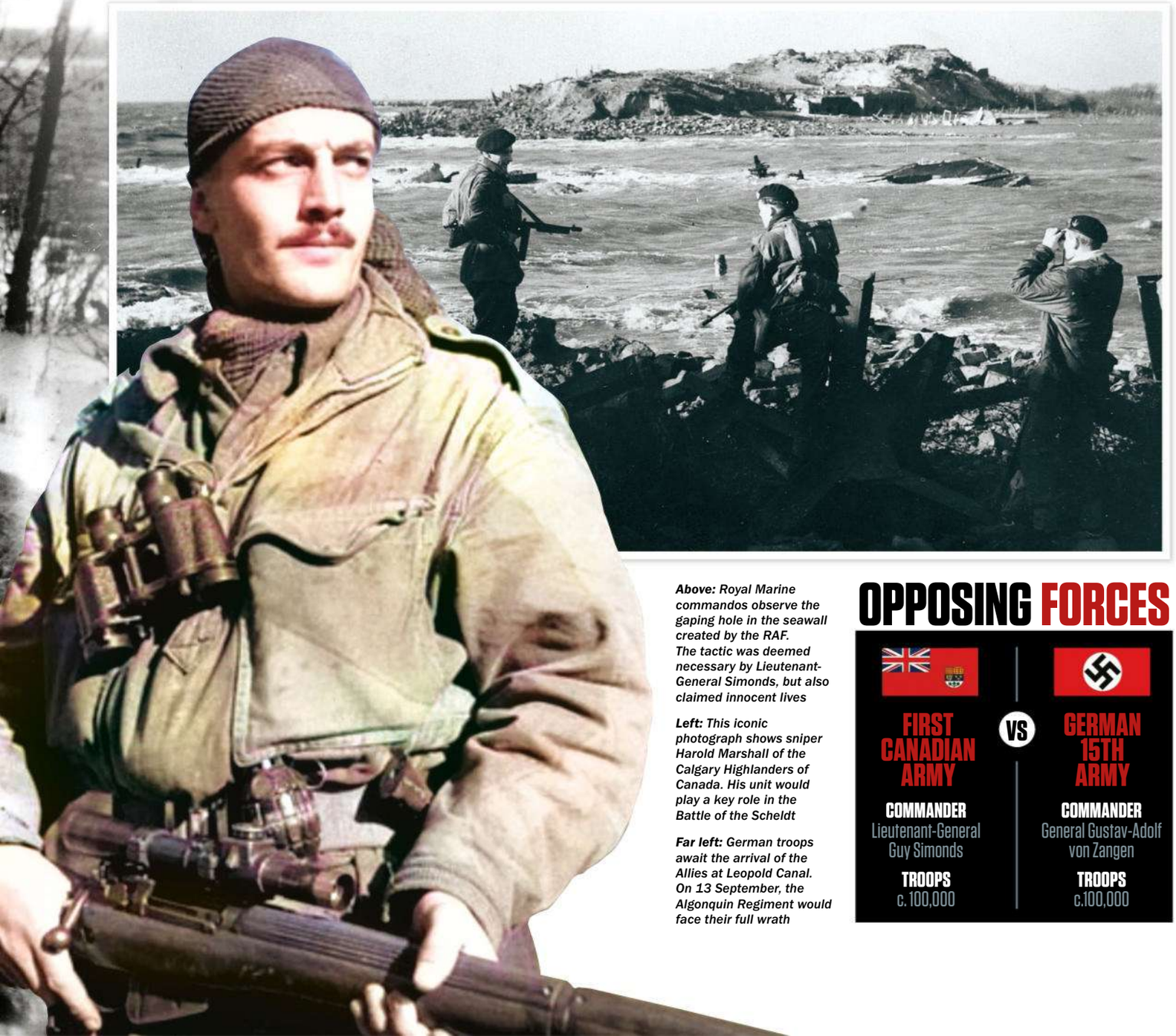
The success of the 1944 Normandy Campaign had come at a heavy cost. Having sustained over 200,000 casualties, the battered and bruised Allies faced new logistical challenges as their advance took them further and further away from the beachhead secured months earlier. While Germany's decisive defeat in the Falaise Gap had enabled sizable gains in France and across the Belgian border, the enemy had retained control of several channel ports, preventing the Allies from shipping supplies into these facilities. A crisis threatened if war materiel could not be brought to the continent and then transported to the liberating forces on a far larger scale.

Located on the left flank closest to the French coastline, First Canadian Army was allocated the unenviable task of besieging the channel ports. Unfortunately, the German defenders would fight with stubborn tenacity to hold Boulogne, Calais and other seabound fortresses (Dunkirk would not fall until 9 May 1945), leaving their much-needed harbours either out of reach or otherwise extensively damaged when the Canadians broke through to them. Hope appeared to rest on Antwerp, situated in Belgium near the border with the Netherlands and boasting the largest port facilities in Europe.

The Belgian resistance captured Antwerp almost entirely intact before the British 11th Armoured Division rolled in on 4 September. Despite the initial victory, the port was by no means safe until the region surrounding it could be cleared of a considerable enemy presence. Beyond Antwerp was the Scheldt estuary, which remained in the hands of the German 15th Army, commanded by General Gustav-Adolf von Zangen. This area needed to be captured if Allied vessels were to enter the harbour unmolested by German coastal batteries and mines. Belgian fighters had attempted to seize strategic bridges over the Albert Canal around the outer reaches of the city, but had been unable to save two of the crossings from German demolition when 11th Armoured Division halted in Antwerp instead of pushing forwards. XXX Corps commander Lieutenant-General Brian Horrocks later expressed regret at not seizing the opportunity, believing in hindsight that he could have caught 15th Army on the back foot. The critical pause allowed the Germans to reorganise as they took up positions on both sides of the Scheldt River, ordered by Hitler to fight to the last man.

Plunged into the quagmire

The landscape surrounding the Scheldt estuary was almost as formidable as the enemy forces now firmly entrenched there. Much of the terrain had been reclaimed from the sea but was nevertheless below sea level – ground called polders. Rainy conditions made these polders virtually impossible to navigate in wheeled vehicles, and there was a risk that artillery pieces could be plunged into the quagmire by their recoil. The ground was little better for tanks, as some unfortunate crews learnt to their cost – as the men slept beneath their Shermans to protect themselves against German artillery, their armoured beasts sank on top of them.



***Above:** Royal Marine commandos observe the gaping hole in the seawall created by the RAF. The tactic was deemed necessary by Lieutenant-General Simonds, but also claimed innocent lives*

***Left:** This iconic photograph shows sniper Harold Marshall of the Calgary Highlanders of Canada. His unit would play a key role in the Battle of the Scheldt*

***Far left:** German troops await the arrival of the Allies at Leopold Canal. On 13 September, the Algonquin Regiment would face their full wrath*

OPPOSING FORCES

FIRST CANADIAN ARMY	VS	GERMAN 15TH ARMY
COMMANDER: Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds		COMMANDER: General Gustav-Adolf von Zangen
TROOPS: c. 100,000		TROOPS: c.100,000

Images: Alamy, Getty, Library and Archives Canada/Department of National Defence, Wiki / PD / Gov, The Museum of the Royal Regiment of Canada

Desperate digging could save a few comrades, but not everyone was spared a suffocating death. The alternative method of movement was atop dykes that served as raised roads through the flats, although the Canadian, British and Polish units that constituted First Canadian Army were vulnerable to bombardment if caught out in the open. There would be little choice once the Germans deliberately flooded the polders to funnel attackers onto the dykes, leaving the advancing Allies with nowhere to hide when the guns let rip. Worse still was the series of canals crisscrossing the Scheldt area that the Germans could utilise as a forbidding barrier against their opponents. This was a defender's ideal battlefield.

Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds, acting commander of First Canadian Army, had a daunting task ahead. On the south shore, a short distance from Antwerp, a concentration of German positions in a 22 mile (35km) by 10 mile (16km) rectangle had been dubbed the Breskens Pocket. On the right flank were the enemy-held approaches to the South Beveland Peninsula. From there, elements of II Canadian Corps would have to push westwards onto the peninsula itself that comprised part of the Scheldt's north shore. South Beveland in turn formed an isthmus leading to the islands of North Beveland and Walcheren. Simonds expected the latter island to be an especially tough nut to crack.

The situation became even more complicated when Simonds' superior, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, turned his attention away from the Scheldt and towards the upcoming Operation Market Garden. Simonds, considered Montgomery's protégé of sorts, would for the most have to rely on his own instincts for planning the forthcoming battle, which he separated into four different phases: snuffing out resistance in the Breskens Pocket (Operation Switchback); securing access to the South Beveland Peninsula; moving west onto the peninsula to capture it (Operation Vitality); and taking Walcheren Island (Operation Infatuate).

01 LIBERATING THE PORT OF ANTWERP

Around 3,500 lightly armed fighters of the Belgian Resistance surprise the German occupation force in Antwerp when they rise up and take the strategic port. Concentrating on critical transportation links and dockyard infrastructure, most of the facilities are intact when the British 11th Armoured Division enter the city on 4 September.

02 POLISH FORCES REACH THE SCHELDT

A lull in the fighting allows the German 15th Army to dig in around the Scheldt estuary in preparation for the inevitable campaign. However, the Allied delays of September are not without some successful manoeuvres, including 1st Polish Division's thrust north towards Terneuzen. The Dutch community is captured on 20 September.

03 ASSAULT ON THE BRESKENS POCKET

Previous attempts to secure a bridgehead over the Leopold Canal had ended in failure, but on 6 October another bold effort is made by II Canadian Corps' 3rd Infantry Division. Crossing the water, the men silence pillboxes and establish slit trenches in the sodden earth. It marks the start of a long and bloody struggle to close the Breskens Pocket.

04 AMPHIBIOUS LANDING AT HOOFDPLAAT

9th Infantry Brigade's amphibious landing behind the German front in the Breskens Pocket sets out on the night of 7-8 October. Unfortunately, complications with the slow and noisy Buffalo troop carriers prompt a delay to the operation. The attack is relaunched over 8-9 October, miraculously maintaining the element of surprise in spite of the initial attempt.

British soldiers stormed the well-defended town of Vlissingen in early November. Meanwhile, the Canadians faced the causeway that led onto Walcheren Island

05 SECURING ACCESS TO THE PENINSULA

Battling their way north some 20 miles (32km), the Canadians of 2nd Infantry Division arrive at the outskirts of Woensdrecht and start fighting for the town on 7 October. Spitfires and Typhoons of No84 Group offer air support over the coming days, but it isn't until 16 October that access to the South Beveland Peninsula is tentatively secured.

06 THE CAUSEWAY DEATH TRAP

Walcheren is teeming with pillboxes, gun positions, batteries and geographical obstacles, not least around the causeway that links the island to the peninsula. Units from the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada, Calgary Highlanders of Canada and Le Régiment de Maisonneuve are nevertheless instructed to storm it in what becomes a bloodbath.

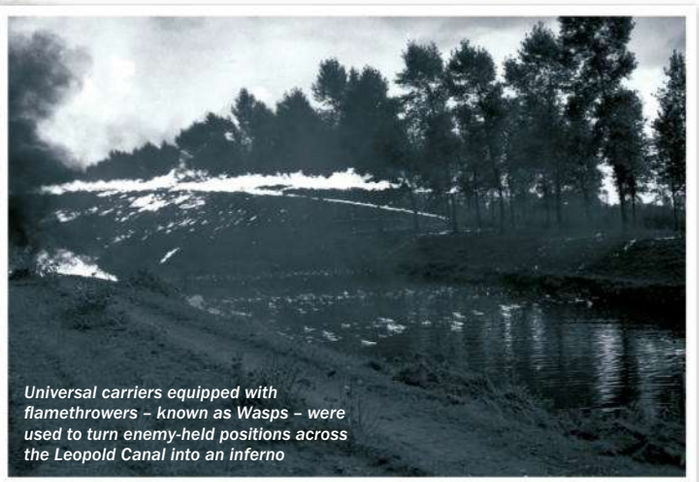
07 CLOSING THE BRESKENS POCKET

Despite the Canadians liberating the port of Breskens itself in October, the German 64th Division continues defending the perimeter that constitutes the Breskens Pocket for several more days. Allied forces push the enemy west towards the sea. Finally, with the capture of Knokke-ann-Zee and nearby strongholds, the pocket is closed by 3 November.

08 ROYAL MARINES AND INFANTRY SEIZE VLISSINGEN

The former British tourist destination and German stronghold of Flushing – or Vlissingen – comes under attack from Royal Marines and infantrymen on 1 November. The amphibious landings are a success, prompting the beginning of the end of enemy resistance on Walcheren. The town's opposition ceases in the early hours of 4 November.

The controversial RAF bombing of Walcheren's dykes sent German soldiers and Dutch civilians scrambling for the high ground



Universal carriers equipped with flamethrowers – known as Wasps – were used to turn enemy-held positions across the Leopold Canal into an inferno

Clearing the Breskens Pocket

Isolated engagements took place throughout the Scheldt region during September 1944, with mixed results. On 13 September, the Algonquin Regiment of 4th Canadian Armoured Division had attempted to establish a bridgehead over the Dérivation de la Lys and Leopold Canal only to be repulsed. However, an offensive carried out by 1st Polish Armoured Division had been a resounding success when its troops clawed their way to the banks of the West Scheldt River. Yet the Breskens Pocket remained a fearsome obstacle.

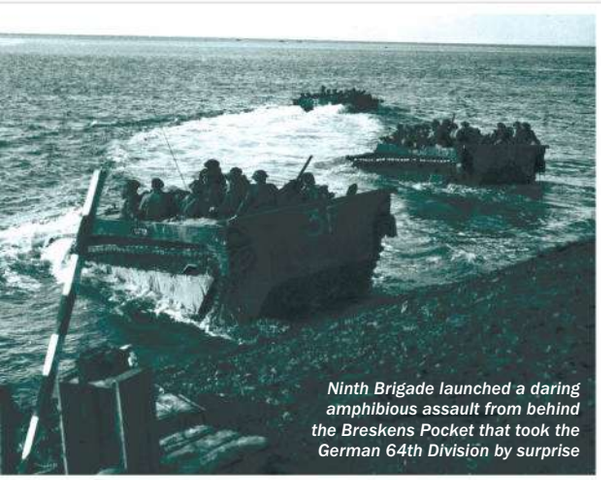
Operation Switchback began in earnest on 6 October, spearheaded by 3rd Canadian Infantry Division under Major-General Dan Spry, with another thrust over the Leopold Canal. Facing them on the far side was the battle-hardened 64th German Division, a 14,000-strong force dug into the south shore. Twenty-seven Wasps – universal carriers equipped with flamethrowers – drenched the enemy-held bank in fire, lighting up the dawn with a horrific spectacle that burned alive anyone in its path. Two companies from 7th Infantry Brigade's Canadian Scottish Regiment and one from each of the Regina Rifles and the Royal Montreal Regiment were then ferried over the water in a maelstrom of machine gun bullets.

The Canadian Scottish on the right managed to advance a few hundred metres, but the Regina Rifles on the left initially struggled to gain a meaningful foothold. It took the arrival of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles the following day to establish a firm bridgehead that eventually linked the two forces together by 9 October. Death rained down from above in the form of artillery and fighters of No 84 Group, a sorely needed morale booster when little progress was made thereafter. To pile on the pressure and break the stalemate, the lead elements of two battalions in 9th Infantry Brigade – the North Nova Scotia Highlanders and the Highland Light Infantry of Canada – launched an amphibious assault intended to crash through the Germans' rear. The contingent embarked on 97 Buffalos – tracked amphibious troop carriers – and manoeuvred behind the enemy at Hoofdplaat. Now cut off from their escape route to Walcheren Island over the Scheldt estuary, the 64th Division fought even more ferociously, employing tenacious tactics that took subsequent Canadian reinforcements by surprise. Concrete pillboxes disguised as small houses, machine guns hidden in haystacks, and even fake trees with German forward observers capable of orchestrating artillery fire all had a devastating impact on the Allied attackers trudging through the flooded hellscape. From 18 October, support from the British 157th Brigade of 52nd (Lowland) Division helped shift the odds in II Canadian Corps' favour, but it wouldn't be until 2 November that the remnants of 64th Division surrendered and 12,700 prisoners were taken.

Access to South Beveland

The fiery push over the Leopold Canal to begin clearing the Breskens Pocket occurred within days of 2nd Infantry Division's drive north towards the South Beveland Peninsula. During much of September, Allied troops had probed enemy positions around the outskirts of Antwerp, an engagement known as the 'streetcar war' due to soldiers riding streetcars back and forth from the city to the battlefield. Once the region had been freed from German

On a rare sunny day, a carrier platoon of The Royal Regiment of Canada moves along the South Beveland Peninsula past Dutch civilians



Ninth Brigade launched a daring amphibious assault from behind the Breskens Pocket that took the German 64th Division by surprise

Scouts of the Calgary Highlanders of Canada on the lookout in Kapellen, Belgium, 6 October

Images: Alamy, Getty, Library and Archives Canada/Department of National Defence, Wiki / PD / Gov, The Museum of the Royal Regiment of Canada

resistance, the northward march could commence on 2 October.

Second Division, having recently come under the command of Brigadier Holley Keefler, traipsed over dykes through waterlogged farmland en route to its objective: the village of Woensdrecht close to the isthmus. When not subjected to intermittent artillery barrages, the Canadians squared up against fanatical young parachutists mustered together as Kampfgruppe Chill (Battle Group Chill) – named after their leader Generalleutnant Kurt Chill.

From 7 October, chaotic skirmishes near Woensdrecht culminated in a valiant yet disastrous assault by the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada on 13 October, a dark moment in the unit's history that would come to be called Black Friday. The bloody affair cost almost 150 casualties by nightfall, including 56 Black Watch troops killed. The war-torn Dutch community would be liberated by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry on 16 October.

Meanwhile, Major-General Harry Foster's 4th Canadian Armoured Division had been sent alongside 2nd Infantry Division's right flank as part of its attachment to I British Corps. Liberating several Belgian towns in the process – the largest being Essen – their next mission was to venture north beyond Woensdrecht to capture the city of Bergen op Zoom. Doing so was expected to assist in denying the Germans bottled up on the South Beveland Peninsula from escaping via the isthmus in full. What's more, and perhaps most crucially, 2nd Division's westward movements would be guarded against enemy counter-attacks stemming from the north if 4th Canadian Armoured Division eliminated that threat.

The difficult feat was achieved on 27 October with significant Canadian casualties, but the fight enabled grateful Dutch civilians to fly their flags for the first time since the occupation. All that was left was to quell the opposition on the south shore, which 3rd Infantry Division continued to do at that stage, and implement the operations on the peninsula and islands.

The struggle for the peninsula

Second Canadian Infantry Division launched Operation Vitality, the westward push onto the South Beveland isthmus, on 24 October – placing it squarely in the mouth of the lion. The first sharpened tooth of the German defence was the Beveland Canal running north-south just past the peninsula's base, blocking the advance. Thousands of enemy troops from the German 70th Division awaited a frontal assault. Though considered by the Allies to be a relatively poor fighting force due to its ranks consisting of men with gastric ailments, the punishing terrain would make up for their weaknesses as the Canadians waded through waist-deep water and trudged through incessant mud to reach their destination. Simonds, recognising the likely hurdle, decided to replicate the amphibious landing in the Breskens Pocket by ordering a similar landing behind the peninsula's canal. The British 52nd (Lowland) Division's 156th and 157th Brigades – a flotilla consisting of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th Cameronians and the 5th Highland Light Infantry, as well as a squadron of tanks from the Staffordshire Yeomanry in support – crossed from Terneuzen on the south shore to South Beveland on the night of 25-26 October, thereby outflanking the Germans. The opening of the new front allowed for 6th Brigade's South Saskatchewan Regiment and Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal to board assault boats, row over the watery obstacle, and establish a bridgehead on the canal's far banks. Faced with little choice, the Germans retreated to Walcheren Island shortly after, intent on a final stand.

There was, however, an Achilles' heel to 'Fortress Walcheren' on which Simonds had already capitalised. Lancaster bombers had breached the island's dykes that protected it from the North Sea. The fight-water-with-water tactics once employed by the enemy had now been used against them. Despite dropping

"FLAMETHROWERS LIT UP THE DAWN WITH A HORRIFIC SPECTACLE THAT BURNED ALIVE ANYONE IN ITS PATH"

Alligator amphibious vehicles passing Terrepin amphibious vehicles (to the left) during the Battle of the Scheldt, 13 October 1944

leaflets warning Dutch civilians to evacuate, countless residents had remained when the flood swept through and submerged enemy strongholds and local communities alike.

The RAF plan to break the German 70th Division up into vulnerable small pockets, on the safe high ground, had worked to a degree, but high command baulked at the request for additional missions to eliminate a number of remaining bunker-protected gun batteries. In lieu of the air operations, further assistance would be provided by the Royal Navy's Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, who, over the course of many weeks in September, had advocated for the clearing of the Scheldt estuary as a priority, but whose desperate pleas had for too long fallen on deaf ears.

Along with Simonds, the naval commander-in-chief sent the battleship HMS Warspite and two 15in gun monitors – HMS Erebus and HMS Roberts – into the action. In tandem, a waterborne assault by Royal Marine commandos landed on Walcheren. Most contentious was Simonds' decision for 2nd Division to make a land-based attack across the long and narrow causeway that connected South Beveland to the island, as a distraction. The Canadians were about to attack a wounded beast that still had claws.

The final stand on Walcheren

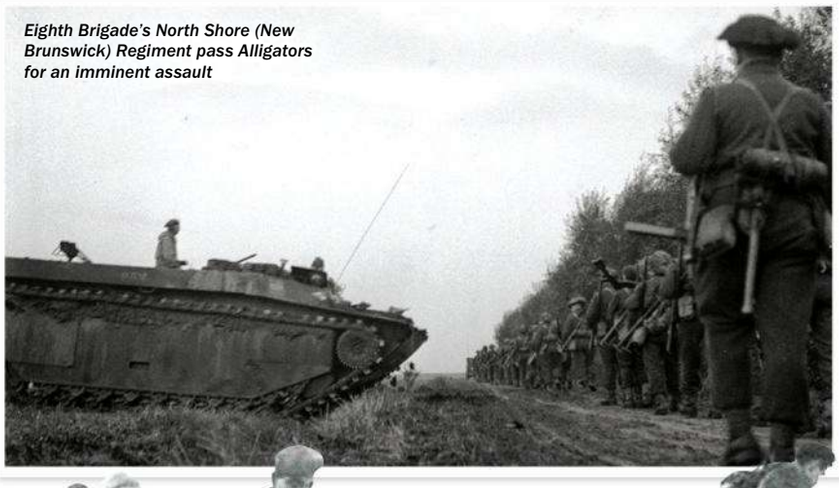
The battle of the causeway would become a bloodbath. Both ends of the road and railway track had been choked up with concrete bunkers and barbed wire, its expanse within range of enemy artillery and mortar fire. Beneath it was the shallow, silted and treacherous Sloe Channel that was bound to be a slog should it be chosen as a route forward. Fourth Infantry Brigade's Royal Regiment of Canada claimed the South Beveland side of the causeway in a successful night operation.

It was down to 5th Brigade to take the rest of the bridge on 31 October. Thrusting ahead into uncertain territory, the ever-jinxed Black Watch was caught in a deadly shower of bombs and bullets that checked it almost instantly, leaving a trail of bodies in the wake of well-positioned machine-gun nests and anti-tank guns, including the feared 3.5in (88mm) bearing straight at them.

The Calgary Highlanders of Canada attempted to outmanoeuvre the Germans by sailing across the flats, but the men were dismayed to realise that the low water was unnavigable. The Canadians instead carried out a second attack over the causeway that night with the Calgary Highlanders in the lead. This too failed, with tragic consequences as terrified soldiers huddled in craters for scant protection against the onslaught. Finally, a pre-dawn storming on 1 November afforded 5th Brigade a tentative bridgehead over the western end of the causeway, yet even that lodging was impeded by determined German counter-attacks that hampered efforts to consolidate gains. Only over 2-3 November did the foothold become permanent when 52nd (Lowland) Division's 157th Brigade outflanked the enemy via a recently found pass in the mud flats.

Elsewhere, the British amphibious landings from the liberated ports of Breskens and Ostend to the beaches of Walcheren were coming to a head. No4 Commando, accompanied by 52nd (Lowland) Division's 155th Infantry Brigade, had crossed over to attack Vlissingen – known as Flushing to

"BOTH ENDS OF THE ROAD AND RAILWAY TRACK HAD BEEN CHOKED UP WITH CONCRETE BUNKERS AND BARBED WIRE"



Eighth Brigade's North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment pass Alligators for an imminent assault

The North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment manhandles an ambulance jeep off its amphibious carrier

Wounded Canadians are carried ashore from a Terrapin amphibious vehicle, 13 October

British authorities – for Operation Infatuate I. Simultaneously, Operation Infatuate II had brought other Royal Marines to the area around Westkapelle. The troops came under fire from numerous enemy batteries before taking on the island's estimated 9,000-strong German forces. Fierce street fighting in Vlissingen sent some British soldiers into buildings where they began 'mouse-holing' – the process of blowing holes through walls to enter the next structure without having to go out in the open.

At Westkapelle, under a blanket of salvos from Royal Navy warships, the commandos encountered stiff resistance, but with the support of the 1st Lothian Regiment's tanks they seized the village in due course. By the night of 3-4 November, opposition between the two primary objectives ceased. Little more than a portion of Walcheren had been grasped by First Canadian Army, yet the island no longer posed the same challenges it once did to Allied shipping in proximity to the Scheldt.

Minesweepers started their extensive clean-up operations that day as the British and Canadians mopped up enemy stragglers inland. On 6 November, the provincial capital of Middelburg, which was surrounded by water, fell to 7th/9th Royal Scots without bloodshed.

Ultimately, on 8 November, the Battle of the Scheldt concluded with the complete surrender of German forces.

Origin of the Ardennes offensive

On 28 November the first Allied convoy entered the port of Antwerp. The occasion was marked with a ceremony attended by the likes of Montgomery and Ramsay, as well as British and American representatives, but no Canadian official was invited. Nevertheless, one of the ships in the convoy was the Canadian-built Fort Cataraqui, which served as a modest symbol of First Canadian Army's outstanding role in the Battle of the Scheldt. The weeks-long struggle would be a turning point for the Allied supply chain, which could now facilitate a full-on push into the German heartland. But it had come at a dreadful price.

From when the formal campaign had kicked off at the beginning of October to when the last shots were fired on 8 November, some 12,800 casualties had been sustained – almost exactly half of them Canadian. The Germans likewise suffered tremendous losses, although no known record exists of the precise numbers. It is thought that at least 4,000 were killed in the battle. Belgian and Dutch civilians were all too often caught up in the various engagements, leading to about 3,000 innocent deaths. And the worst was still to come when the Nazi war machine unleashed a swift retaliation of around 1,600 V2 rocket attacks against Antwerp over the coming weeks and months, close to half of all V2 rockets launched during the war.

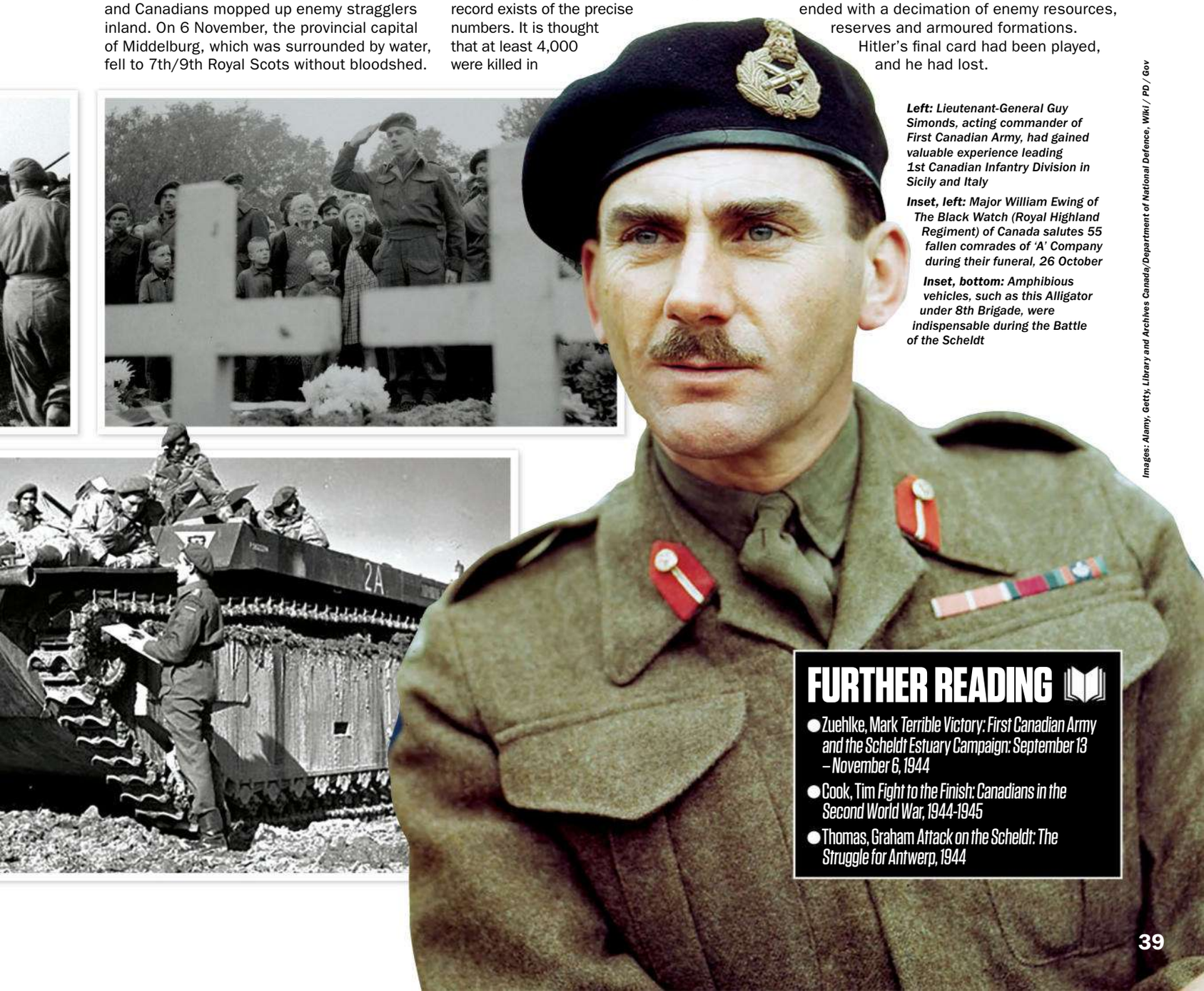
Hitler was furious at 15th Army's failure to deny the Allies access to Antwerp's port, a dire situation that posed an existential threat to his Third Reich.

Increasingly deluded that the tide could be turned back in the favour of Nazi Germany, the Führer drew up plans for the next – and one of the last – consequential battles in Western Europe of the Second World War.

The Ardennes Offensive, also known as the Battle of the Bulge, or to the Germans: Watch On the Rhine, was Hitler's do-or-die attempt to recapture Antwerp through a dogged blitzkrieg in the hope of stalling the inevitable.

The gamble of 16 December 1944 – a direct result of First Canadian Army's successful Scheldt Campaign mere weeks earlier – ended with a decimation of enemy resources, reserves and armoured formations.

Hitler's final card had been played, and he had lost.



***Left:** Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds, acting commander of First Canadian Army, had gained valuable experience leading 1st Canadian Infantry Division in Sicily and Italy*

***Inset, left:** Major William Ewing of The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada salutes 55 fallen comrades of 'A' Company during their funeral, 26 October*

***Inset, bottom:** Amphibious vehicles, such as this Alligator under 8th Brigade, were indispensable during the Battle of the Scheldt*

Images: Alamy, Getty, Library and Archives Canada/Department of National Defence, Wiki / PD / Gov

FURTHER READING

- Zuehlke, Mark *Terrible Victory: First Canadian Army and the Scheldt Estuary Campaign: September 13 – November 6, 1944*
- Cook, Tim *Fight to the Finish: Canadians in the Second World War, 1944-1945*
- Thomas, Graham *Attack on the Scheldt: The Struggle for Antwerp, 1944*

Forlorn Hope

WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

In 1943, resistance fighters in the Polish capital attacked German soldiers, sent to round up and transport the city's Jews to concentration camps

WORDS **MAREK SOBIERALSKI**

"When flames engulfed the upper parts of a building, Jews appeared on the top floors. These were their last minutes. They ran from window to window. They gestured vigorously. They climbed onto the windowsills. Their black silhouettes stood out against the fiery background, against the moving wall of flames.

"To save themselves from a painful death by fire, they jumped down. Not onto pillows, but onto the asphalt of courtyards and streets below. There lies some black suicidal mannequin with a red head. The skull is cracked. Piles of brain next to it. The house continues to burn. The roof collapses with a crash and the house is on fire. And it continues to glow for many days. Only the May rain choked everything that smouldered."

These were the recollections of Jürgen Stroop, the SS commander who served as SS and police leader in occupied Poland and Greece. He is remembered primarily as the liquidator of the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw. The final result of his orders was its complete demolition and liquidation, during which his forces committed terrible crimes. He described the action in his report: "Jewish residential district in Warsaw no longer exists"

The uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto raged between 19 April and 16 May 1943 and is recognised around the world as a symbol of great heroism. It was also the first large-scale armed action undertaken by Polish underground organisations against the Germans, and the first urban uprising in Nazi-occupied Europe.

On the eve of Passover that year, German troops entered the Warsaw Ghetto equipped with tanks, flamethrowers and machine guns. Opposite them stood an army of several hundred young Jews, mainly armed with pistols and Molotov cocktails. Among the fighters, the well-organised Zydowski Zwiazek Wojskowy (ZZW) Jewish Military Union, stood out. Soldiers from that unit, better equipped and trained than the rest of the insurgents, and fighting alongside the Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa (ZOB) Jewish Combat Organisation, battled ferociously. ZZW was made up of former officers of the Polish Army and Jewish activists associated with revisionist Zionism. Meanwhile ZOB was a clandestine armed resistance organisation of Polish Jews that operated in several major cities during the Holocaust, and was the most well-known among the Jewish resistance formations during the Second World War.

The Warsaw Ghetto, a closed and walled district located in an area covering 1.3 square miles (3.4 square km) in the north-western part of central Warsaw, was where Jews from the city and other Jews displaced from ghettos in other towns and cities were imprisoned. By March 1941, around 460,000 people were squeezed in, creating a population density of 146,000 people per 0.4 square mile (one square kilometre). This overcrowding caused dire sanitary conditions, starvation and epidemics. On 22 July 1942, the Germans had begun deporting its inhabitants to the Treblinka extermination camp as part of Operation Reinhard, which was aimed at the physical liquidation of the Jewish population.

The first organised revolt against these deportations occurred on 18 January 1943 when the Germans began their second deportation of the Jews. Fighters of ZZW, joined by elements of ZOB, resisted, directly engaging the Germans. The Jewish fighters suffered heavy losses but the Nazis also took casualties, and the deportations were temporarily halted. Only 5,000 Jews were removed instead of the originally planned 8,000. The trigger for the main uprising was the start of the final liquidation of the ghetto, as ordered by Heinrich Himmler, on the eve of the Jewish Passover

Jewish civilians surrender during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in what became one of the most infamous photographs of WWII

Captured Jewish resistance fighters. Bluma Wyszogrodzka (left) was shot dead and Malka Zdrojewicz was taken to Majdanek extermination camp but survived

The ultimately doomed uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto was in response to the Nazi operation to liquidate the Jewish population in the city

"JEWISH FIGHTERS SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES BUT THE NAZIS ALSO TOOK CASUALTIES, AND THE DEPORTATIONS WERE TEMPORARILY HALTED"

All images: Alamy, Getty

This photo, taken in secret from a window of St Sofia hospital in Warsaw in April 1943, shows Jews being led away to almost certain death

Nazi troops were ordered to systematically set fire to buildings as they fought to suppress ferocious resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto

The Polish underground press claimed 86 German soldiers were killed and 420 injured during the uprising

holiday. By that time there were only about 50,000-70,000 Jews remaining. At 6am German military and police units, with collaborating Ukrainian and Latvian formations under the command of Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankenegg, entered the ghetto from two sides. The defenders were poised to confront them and concentrated their forces in three positions. They consisted of about 1,000-1,500 poorly armed fighters: about 220-800 from ZOB (including many women) and 150-400 from ZZW (consisting only of men), and several hundred insurgents from other unrelated groups.

According to Stroop's official report, each day approximately 2,054 German soldiers and 36 officers participated in the fighting, with the 3rd battalion of the 23rd Ordnungspolizei regiment being sent in towards the end of the action. According to estimates by the Polish Home Army, German forces consisted of a motorised group of about 5,000 troops and at least 15 armoured cars, supported by a number of field guns, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns and mortars.

The advancing Germans were surprised by heavy fire from ZOB units commanded by Zacharia Artstein, Henryk Zylberberg and Lejb Rotblat. They were also pelted with grenades and Molotov cocktails. The initial clash lasted two hours and ended with a ZOB victory, with the Germans suffering casualties and retreating. From the other direction, ZOB soldiers led by Berl Braude, Aron Bryskin, Mordechaj Growas and Leon Gruzalc attacked a German unit moving in armoured cars. Two vehicles were burned with grenades and Molotov cocktails, and after about half-an-hour the Germans withdrew. Heavy fighting continued on Muranowski Square, where ZZW members fired machine guns at the approaching German troops, who soon withdrew from there too. That same afternoon, full command of the German troops was given to Stroop, who reorganised the subordinated forces.

They would return at dawn the next day and enter the ghetto again, once again meeting strong resistance. The Germans began using scorched-earth tactics, setting fire to and destroying entire quarters of the district. They continued to search for any remaining fighters and civilians, having previously turned off water, electricity and gas supplies. They used smoke grenades, tear gas and explosives to force Jews from their improvised 'bunkers' and hiding places. Stroop personally gave the order to systematically set fire to all buildings.

In the face of this barbarity, on 23 April ZOB issued a defiant proclamation to the Polish population of Warsaw vowing to fight to the death (see below). On the same day, Stroop banned Poles from entering the ghetto, invalidating all passes issued before 23 April. Anyone who entered the "former Jewish residential area" without a valid new pass would be shot.

"THE GREATEST CRIME IN HUMAN HISTORY IS BEING COMMITTED. WE KNOW THAT YOU HELP THE MARTYRED JEWS AS MUCH AS YOU CAN. I THANK YOU, COMPATRIOTS, ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND THE GOVERNMENT"

Following the establishment of military organisations in the ghetto in the spring of 1942, the Jewish fighting units had tried to establish contact with the Polish Underground on the 'Aryan' side. At first, the help they received was small, but aid increased after the successful resistance operation in the ghetto in January 1943. After the outbreak of the main uprising in April, the Home Army supported the insurgents with a series of small military actions outside the ghetto walls. Attacks on German positions were launched by the Armia Krajowa (AK) Home Army, as well as by other smaller resistance organisations. On 5 May, the commander-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces and the prime minister of the government-in-exile, General Władysław Sikorski, appealed to his compatriots in the country for help for Jews via BBC radio:

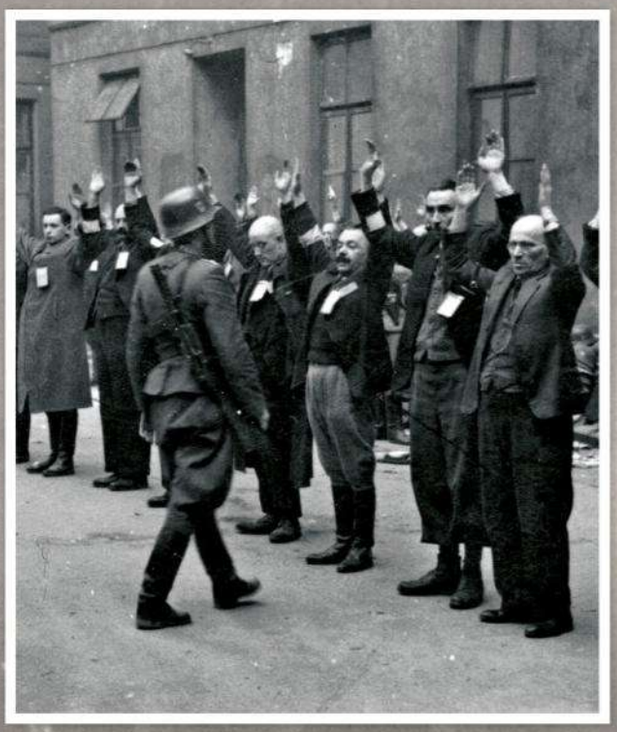
"In mid-April at 4am, the Germans began to liquidate the Warsaw Ghetto. They locked the remnants of the Jews in a police cordon, drove tanks and armoured cars inside, and carried out their destructive work. The fight has been going on ever since. Bomb explosions, shots, fires continue day and night. The greatest crime in human history is being committed. We know that you help the martyred Jews as much as you can. I thank you, compatriots, on behalf of myself and the government. I am asking you to give them all possible help on behalf of myself and the government, and at the same time to eradicate this terrible cruelty."

The speech was printed by Zegota, the Polish Council to Aid Jews, and 25,000 copies were posted on walls and distributed among the population outside the ghetto. Ultimately, operations to blow up the ghetto walls carried out by the Home Army failed because of the large deployment of German forces around the ghetto. The Jews were on their own. The uprising had no strategic military goals and

"Poles, Citizens, Soldiers of Freedom.
Amidst the roar of cannons from which the German army is pouring into our homes, into the apartments of our mothers, children and wives;
Amidst the rattle of machine guns, which we capture in the fight against cowardly gendarmes and S.S.-sheep;
Amidst the smoke of fires and dust of blood of the murdered Warsaw ghetto, we - the prisoners of the ghetto - send you cordial greetings.
We know that in heartfelt pain and tears of compassion, that with admiration and fear for the outcome of this fight, you watch the war that we have been waging for many days against the cruel occupier.
But know also that every ghetto doorstep, as before, will still claim that we may all die in the fight, but we will not surrender; that we are panting like you for revenge and punishment for all the crimes of our common enemy.
There is a fight for your and our freedom.
For your and our - human, social, national - honour and dignity.
We will avenge the crimes of Auschwitz, Treblinka, BełZec and Majdanek.
Long live the brotherhood of arms and blood of fighting Poland!
Long live Freedom!
Death to the executioners and torturers!
Long live the fight to the death against the occupier!"

All images: Alamy, Getty

Jürgen Stroop, second from the left, observes the flames of the burning Ghetto



Jewish department heads of the Brauer helmet factory in Warsaw are arrested by the SS, 24 April 1943

Nazi reports stated over 40,000 Jews from the ghetto were captured and sent to Treblinka and other death camps

Many ghetto resistance fighters were murdered on the spot by their Nazi captors

had no chance of success. It was an armed retaliation and response to genocide, by the people against whom the genocide was being perpetrated. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is understandably steeped in symbolic significance, and is considered by many Jewish people to be one of the most important events in their history.

After the war, Kazimierz Moczarski, a Home Army hero, shared a cell with Jürgen Stroop for nearly nine months, while incarcerated in Warsaw's Mokotów Prison. They were both awaiting execution, and the Stalinist regime treated them both with equal contempt. Moczarski documented Stroop's account of the uprising in his book *Conversations with an Executioner*. Stroop, who had changed his birth name Josef to the more 'Nordic'-sounding Jürgen, had owed his military rank to Nazi Party promotions and was an uneducated man with limited horizons. He had Catholic family roots, although declared himself as a follower of the official Third Reich old German occult religion. In documents he defined himself as 'Gottgläubig' – 'follower of a new pagan god' – and, still managing to preserve an air of self-importance in captivity, he lectured his cellmates:

"Christ was a very wise man, a philosopher and a romantic. He was half-Nordic, of course. His mother, who served in the Temple under the protection of an important priest, became pregnant by a blond German, a soldier from one of the Germanic tribes that reached Asia Minor from the Carpathians. That's why the Christ was fair-haired and thought differently from the Jews who doctored his teachings and spread them around the world to further their own aims – the weakening and debasement of man through guilt."

While preparing for his own execution, Stroop shared accounts of the bloody campaign to destroy the Warsaw Ghetto. He bore deep contempt for anyone whose attitude deviated from his own brutal approach. He recalled one encounter with one of his own men, during the uprising.

"A Nordic, with blue eyes […] an anti-Semite, and he was crying. He mumbled something about how he couldn't… the blood… the corpses… the children… I completely lost my head and punched him in the face. Then I had him thrown out of the Ghetto area along with a hundred fifty or so of his lily-livered pals."

"THEY KNEW THEY COULDN'T WIN, AND THAT THEIR SURVIVAL WAS UNLIKELY, BUT STILL THEY FOUGHT, FOR THE HONOUR OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND IN RESPONSE TO THE SILENCE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD"

At other times, Stroop appeared to acknowledge the courage and perseverance of the Jewish fighters:

"The Jews surprised me and my officers […] with their determination in battle. And believe me, as veterans of World War I and SS members, we knew what determination in battle was all about. The tenacity of your Warsaw Jews took us completely by surprise. That's the real reason the Grossaktion [the deportation and murder of the Warsaw Ghetto's Jews] lasted as long as it did."

Stroop was hanged in 1952. Moczarski eventually received a life sentence but was ultimately set free as a result of the amnesty of 1956. He used the time he'd spent in prison composing an insightful analysis of Nazi ideology. He later stated:

"My initial shock at finding myself among Nazis quickly transformed itself into a resolve to use this proximity to get to know my cellmates as well as I could. By analysing their personalities and extracting their life stories, I felt I might gain some degree of insight into the historical, psychological and sociological mechanism that had led certain Germans to become genocidal killers who ruled the Reich and attempted to impose their Ordnung [Order] through Europe and beyond."

There is no reliable data detailing the losses of the insurgents and the number of victims of the eventual liquidation of the ghetto. According to Nazi data of the time, which was deliberately inflated by the authors of the Stroop report, about 6,000 Jews had died in combat. It stated that 56,065 people were captured, of which 7,000 were murdered on the spot, while 6,900 were sent to Treblinka and about 36,000 to other camps. During the suppression of the uprising the Germans committed many atrocities and crimes against the inhabitants, and carried out numerous mass executions. Several dozen ZOB soldiers survived the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising but most of them didn't live to see the end of the war itself – they died fighting in partisan units, in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, or were captured by the Germans and sent to death camps. Almost all ZZW soldiers were killed in the fighting in the ghetto. The Stroop report gives the number of German casualties as 16 dead and 85 wounded, which is clearly underestimated – the Polish underground press at the time reported the number as 86 killed and 420 wounded.

Leon Kopelman, who lived in Israel after the war, died on 13 August 2021, and was described by *The Times of Israel* as the last known active participant of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. There are no longer any Jewish survivors who were direct participants and witnesses of those 28 days that were filled with terrible and heroic events. The uprising was the largest single revolt by Jews during the Second World War. They knew they couldn't win, and that their survival was unlikely, but still they fought, for the honour of the Jewish people and in response to the silence of the outside world. Marek Edelman, the only ZOB commander to survive the uprising, said their inspiration to fight was "not to allow the Germans alone to pick the time and place of our deaths".

All images: Alamy, Getty

Heroes of the Medal of Honor

HIROSHI 'HERSHEY' MIYAMURA

On 24 April 1951, when Chinese communist soldiers attacked US Company H in the hills near the Imjin River, this corporal held back the tide and protected his men

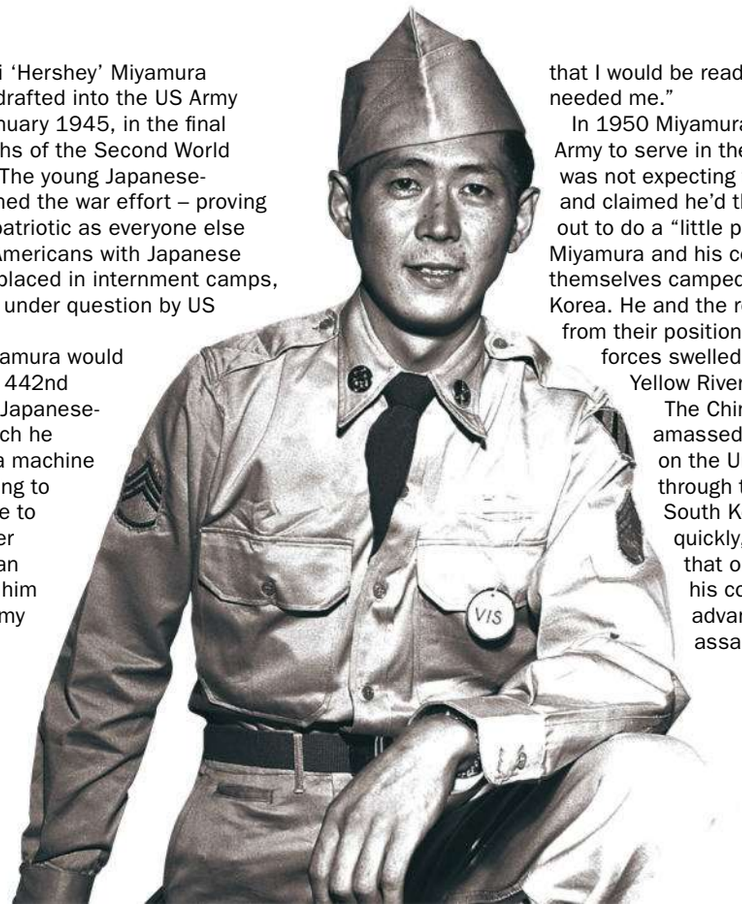
WORDS **JACKSON VAN UDEN**

Hiroshi 'Hershey' Miyamura was drafted into the US Army in January 1945, in the final months of the Second World War. The young Japanese-American eagerly joined the war effort – proving that he was just as patriotic as everyone else during a time when Americans with Japanese heritage were being placed in internment camps, and their loyalty was under question by US government policy.

During the war Miyamura would briefly serve with the 442nd Infantry Regiment, a Japanese-American unit, in which he received training as a machine gunner before returning to the United States due to ill health. He was later discharged after Japan surrendered, leaving him to enlist in the US Army Reserve. Miyamura, when asked why he joined the Reserve, replied: "I thought that with my training that I would be ready to serve again if my country needed me."

In 1950 Miyamura was called up by the US Army to serve in the Korean War. However, he was not expecting to participate in any fighting, and claimed he'd thought they were heading out to do a "little police work". By April 1951 Miyamura and his company, Company H, found themselves camped on the eastern side of North Korea. He and the rest of his company watched from their position as the Chinese communist forces swelled on the north side of the Yellow River.

The Chinese forces had been amassed to begin a fresh assault on the United Nations lines to break through to try and recapture the South Korean capital Seoul. Very quickly, after becoming a force that outnumbered Miyamura and his comrades, the Chinese Army advanced. In reaction to this assault Miyamura, as the machine



A member of the US Army Reserve, Hiroshi Miyamura was called up in 1950 to serve in the Korean War

Images: Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

Miyamura with his Medal of Honor after giving a lecture at one of his last public appearances before his death in 2022

“CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND INTREPIDITY ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY WHILE SERVING... [HIS] INDOMITABLE HEROISM AND CONSUMMATE DEVOTION TO DUTY REFLECT THE UTMOST GLORY ON HIMSELF AND UPHOLD THE ILLUSTRIOUS TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE”

Medal of Honor citation

gun squadron leader, was ordered by his platoon sergeant to take 15 men up into the hills just south of Imjin River to help defend the regiment and attempt to hold the line against the Chinese attackers.

Up in the hills near the river on 24 April 1951, Miyamura and his men set themselves up to defend their line, their regiment and their fellow countrymen. He readied himself with his machine gun as they waited for the Chinese advance. Once the Chinese attacked Miyamura took control of his squad and directed them to shoot at the Chinese in short bursts while he also fired on them with his machine gun and threw grenades. As the assault grew more intense and it began to look as if he and his squad might be overrun, Miyamura fixed his bayonet to his rifle and, according to his Medal of Honor citation, "unhesitatingly jumped from his shelter" and charged at the enemy. He single-handedly broke up the attack by killing approximately ten Chinese soldiers in close-quarters combat, his quick intervention helping save his men who'd survived the initial assault. He then returned to his squad's position to help administer first aid and direct them to evacuate the wounded.

With the injured troops safely evacuated, Miyamura and what remained of his squad defended against another savage assault from the advancing Chinese. However, the attacks continued to grow in their intensity and began to slowly chip away at his squad's defence. Miyamura ordered his men to withdraw to a second machine gun position while he covered them with what was left of his machine gun's ammunition, before fighting his way through another Chinese attack with his bayonet to meet his squad at the second position.

The Chinese soldiers continued to advance and Miyamura, ever concerned with the safety of his men, ordered them to retreat as he stayed behind to cover their withdrawal. He

***Above:** Miyamura pictured at a Japanese American Citizens League Banquet in his honour shortly after his return home*

***Top:** President Dwight D Eisenhower presents him with the Medal of Honor, October 1953*

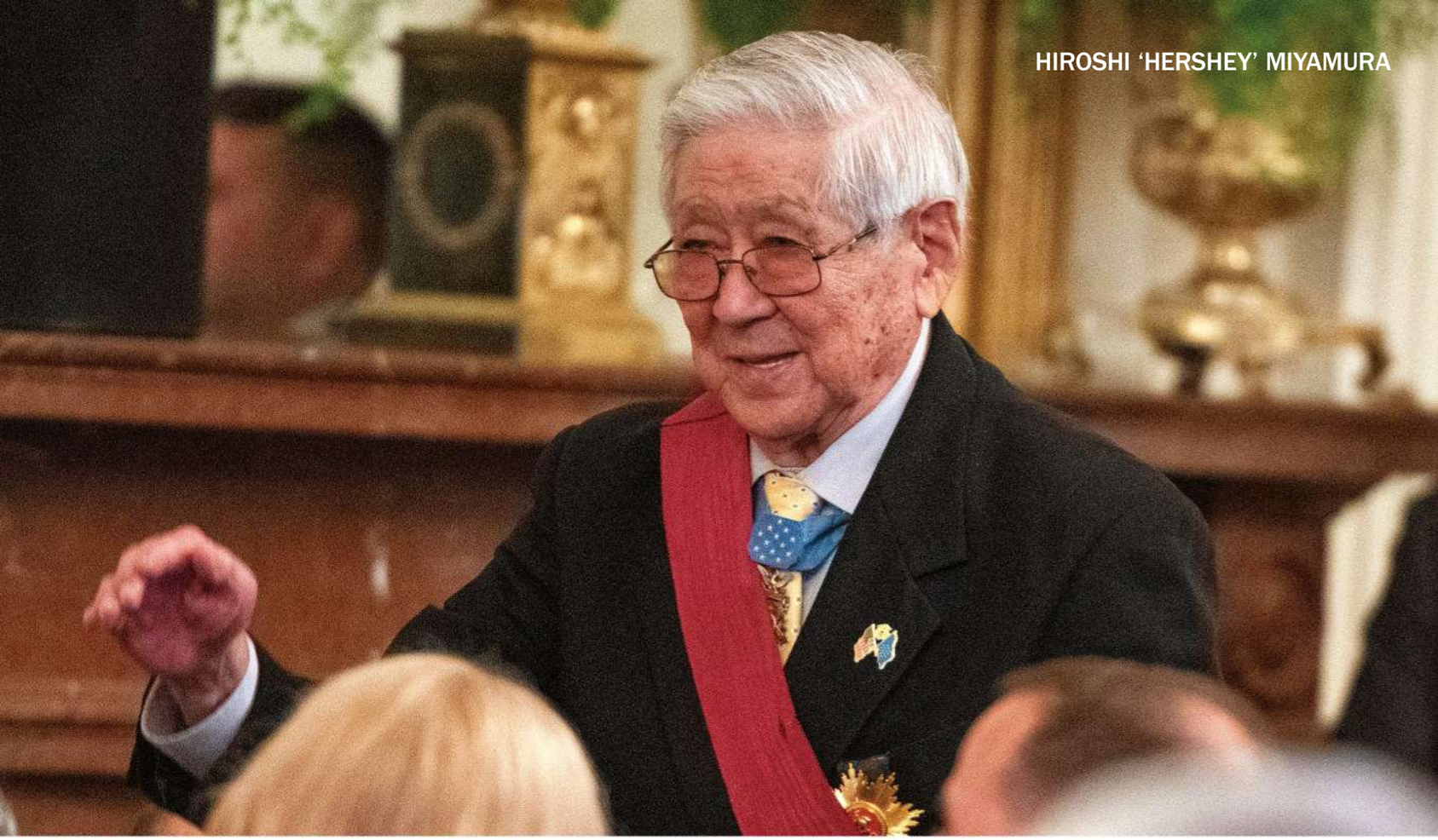
continued to fight despite receiving several wounds, using all of his machine gun ammunition, grenades and his trusty bayonet to hold off the advance. During this stand-off Miyamura killed more than 50 Chinese soldiers.

As he fought off the enemy with the last of his supplies, Miyamura recalled "our mortars started dropping phosphorous bombs on our position. That woke me up to the thought: 'I've got to get out of here.'" And get out of there he did, making a break down the hill through the trenches to reach his company. With thousands of Chinese soldiers surrounding Miyamura, this made the journey towards safety incredibly treacherous. Making his way down the hill he was forced to engage in hand-to-hand combat with a Chinese soldier. During their fight, he stabbed the man with his bayonet. Miyamura must have thought he was close to navigating a safe passage down the hill, but as he fell back while withdrawing his bayonet from his opponent, the severely wounded Chinese soldier threw a grenade at him. The ever-alert Miyamura managed to kick it away before it exploded.

During the engagement Miyamura had so far managed to escape the clutches of death several times, and the grenade was yet another narrow escape for him. When it exploded shrapnel tore into his legs, leaving him badly wounded. Despite the pain of his injuries, Miyamura continued his bloody slog to reach safety. At the camp towards which he was heading, his comrades had set up a defensive parameter to slow the Chinese advance. However, this also had the effect of slowing down Miyamura as he ran into the barbed wire, suffering more injuries. He was forced to crawl under the barbed wire while trying to gain the attention of his men, but the pain of all wounds caused him to pass out.

Four days later the US Army 3rd Division recaptured the hill where Miyamura had made his stand and saw the dead Chinese soldiers left in the wake of his attempts to defend his men. His Medal of Honor citation was drafted days after his heroic actions had been reported, with the assumption that he had died during the fighting. The citation honours Miyamura's "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty

Freedom Village, where Miyamura was returned to the US, being prepared for the arrival of Chinese prisoners of war



***Top:** During his captivity at the hands of the Chinese, Miyamura's Medal of Honor had been kept top secret by the US authorities to protect him from retribution*

***Above:** Miyamura greets fellow Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant 1st Class Leroy Petry in 2011*

***Right:** Miyamura died on 29 November 2022 at the age of 97 and was buried with full military honours at Sunset Memorial Park in Gallup, New Mexico*

while serving” and his “indomitable heroism and consummate devotion to duty reflect the utmost glory on himself and uphold the illustrious traditions of the military service”.

Unknown to Miyamura’s men, he had survived after passing out within touching distance of safety. When he awoke, he heard marching. He remained still. Just when he thought he might be able to resume his escape, a voice behind him barked at him to get up and told him he was his prisoner. He was now a captive of the Chinese, and for the next month he was forced to walk 300 miles (483km) through North Korea to a prisoner of war camp. During this march, he received little to no medical treatment and no rations, and had to witness many of his fellow prisoners die on the march. Miyamura would remain imprisoned for the next 27 months, fighting against hunger and dysentery.

Presumed missing in action, his Medal of Honor was awarded secretly in December 1951, eight months after his capture. Four months later, the Chinese included Miyamura’s name on a list of prisoners of war. From this point it became critical that his award was kept secret to keep him safe, as explained by Brigadier General Ralph Osborne: ”If the Reds knew what he had done to a good number of their soldiers just before he was taken prisoner, they might have taken revenge on this young man.” This earned Miyamura the title of America’s Secret Hero.

On 20 August 1953, Miyamura was released by the Chinese at the Freedom Village. Two months later he was presented with his Medal of Honor by President Dwight D Eisenhower at the White House.

During his military career, Miyamura became a hero, saving hundreds of lives. He also proved, like he said when he enlisted, that he was just as American as every other citizen of his country. He was an inspiration to millions across the world but he was the greatest inspiration to his granddaughter, who now serves as a lieutenant in the US Air Force. She says: “He’s the reason why I’m serving in the military today. He has lived his whole life with honour, and that is a great legacy for me.”

Images: Alamy, Getty, Wiki / PD / Gov

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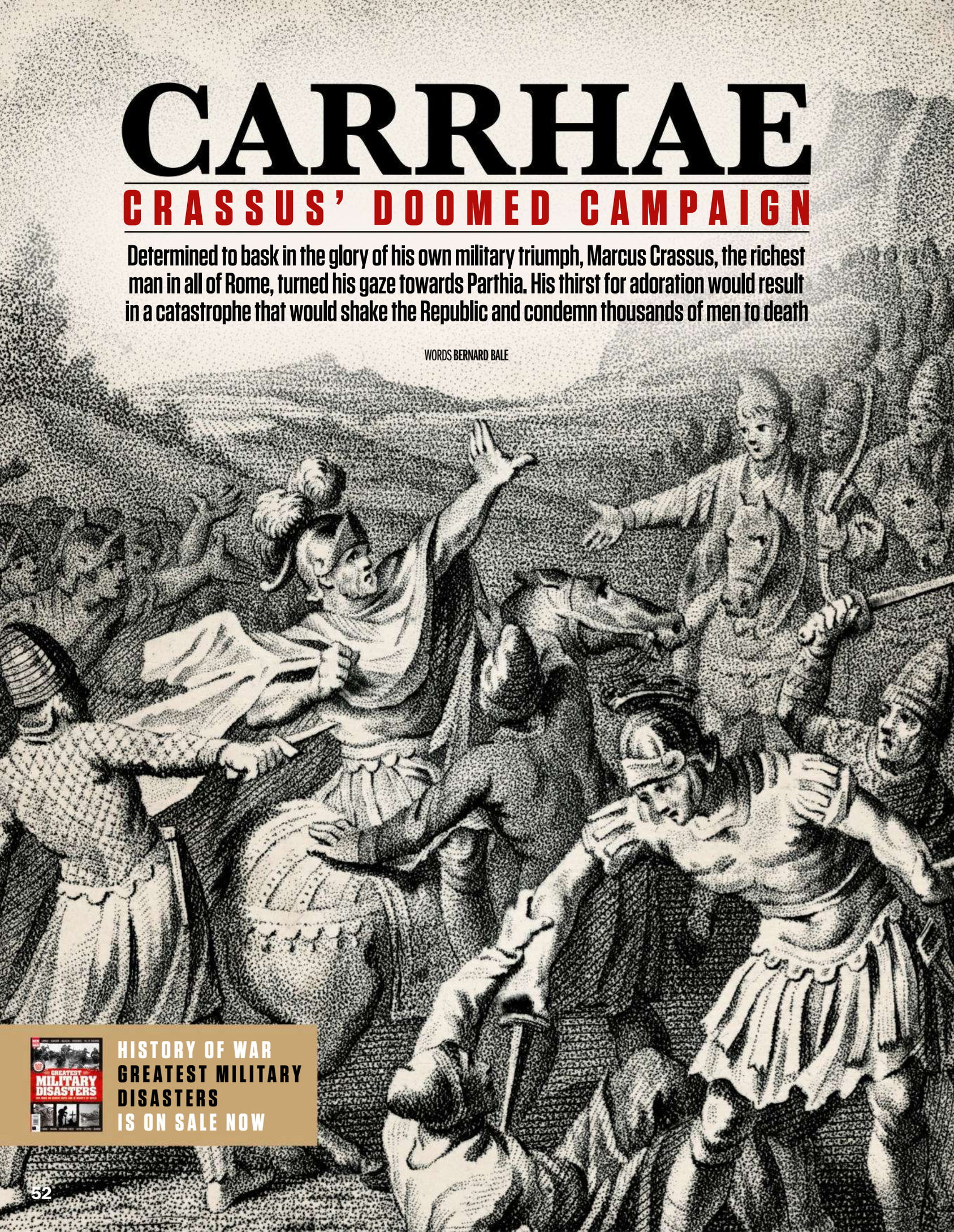
CARRHAE

CRASSUS' DOOMED CAMPAIGN

Determined to bask in the glory of his own military triumph, Marcus Crassus, the richest man in all of Rome, turned his gaze towards Parthia. His thirst for adoration would result in a catastrophe that would shake the Republic and condemn thousands of men to death

WORDS **BERNARD BALE**



HISTORY OF WAR
GREATEST MILITARY
DISASTERS
IS ON SALE NOW

The words 'Romans' and 'defeated' do not sit well as neighbours in one sentence. However, the might of Rome met its match on more than one occasion, and few of her defeats were more devastating than the one inflicted at Carrhae, when Crassus' legions ran into the guile and determination of the Parthian army.

It should have been a mismatch from the start as 40,000 highly trained, battle-hardened fighting men of Rome descended upon what was thought to be a feisty but less battle-proven Parthian army. As it happened, it was indeed a mismatch, but not as expected.

There were still more questions than answers at the end of this bloody battle. How did it all go wrong? Why was Senator Marcus Licinius Crassus so keen to take on the Parthians in the first place? How was this shocking defeat going to shake the very foundations of the Roman Republic? Perhaps a look at Carrhae and why it was important would be helpful at this stage.

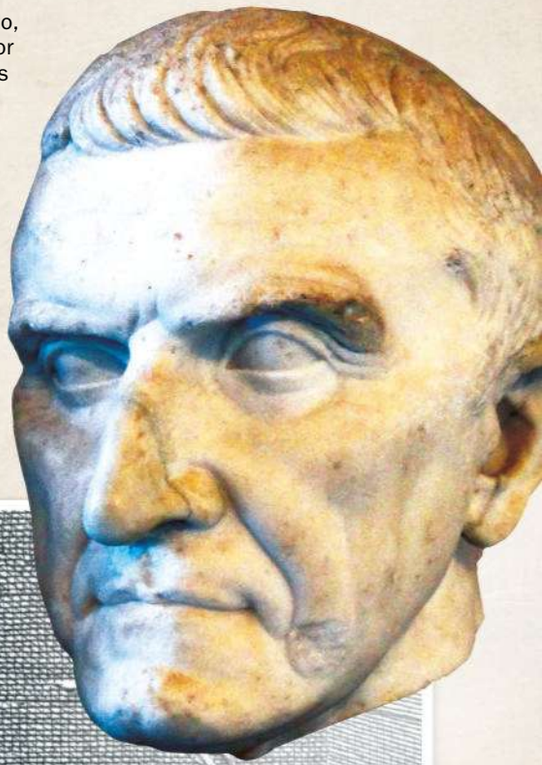
Carrhae no longer exists, but the battlefield was thought to be to its east, an area now known as Harran, which nestles on the Turkish side of the border with Iran. It was once known as Mesopotamia and was a much-coveted spot on the trade routes between East and West.

"THERE WERE STILL MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS AT THE END OF THIS BLOODY BATTLE. HOW DID IT ALL GO WRONG?"

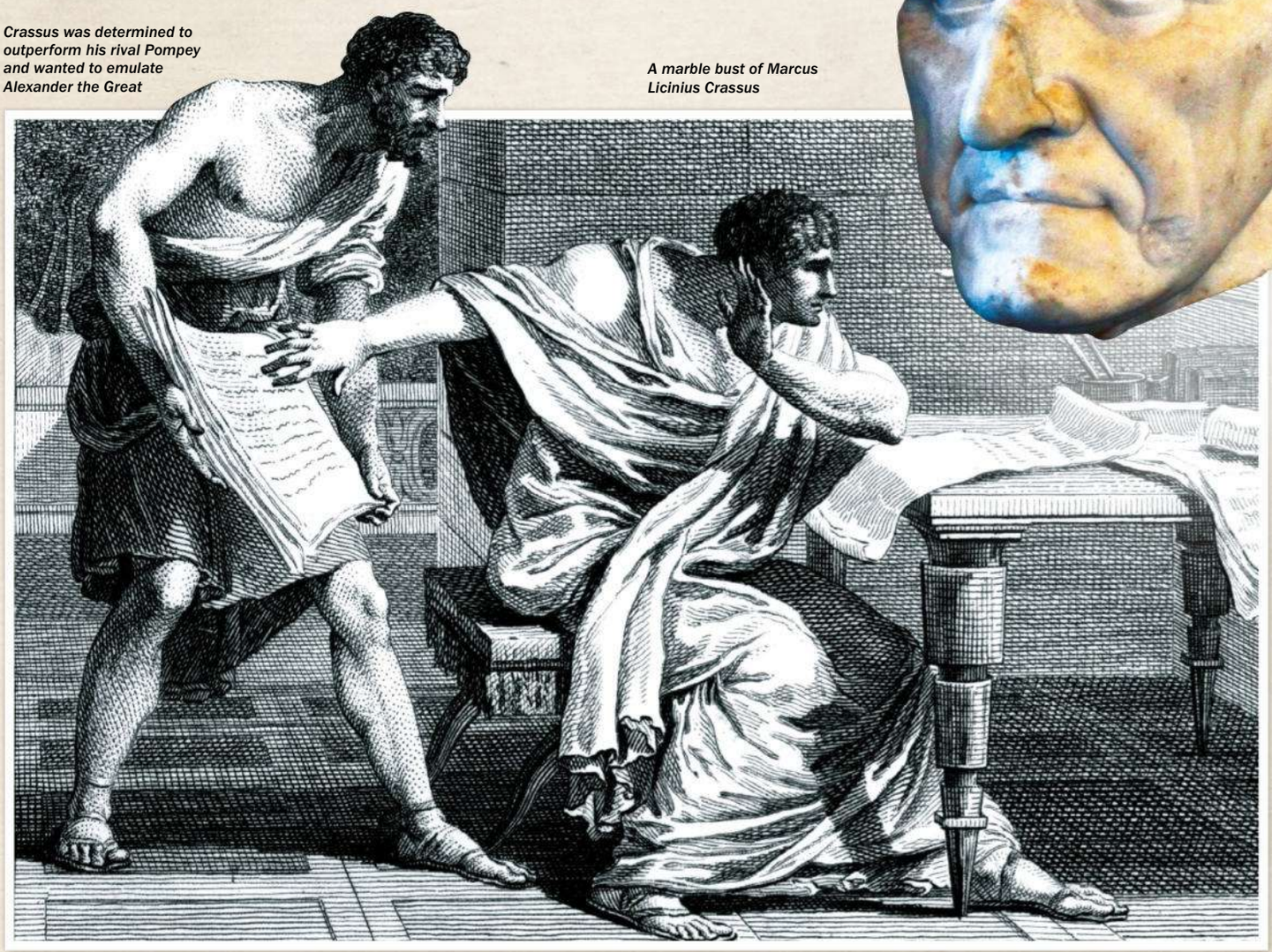
Alexander the Great made sure that he conquered it during his famous empire-inflating campaigns. In 336 BCE he became the 20-year-old king of the whole region, something that any self-respecting Roman senator would wish to emulate. In 53 BCE, nearly 300 years later, Crassus was unable to resist the temptation of repeating the glory of Alexander's triumph.

He was driven in no small part by a fierce rivalry with Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, known today as Pompey the Great. A seeker of glory and wealth – although he had an abundance of both already – Crassus wanted to outstrip Pompey, who could not put a foot wrong in the eyes of the Republic and its people. He had quelled a slave uprising, scattered pirates who had previously attacked Roman shipping and her coastlines, and expanded or held Roman territories in numerous areas, including Syria, which was notably difficult.

Anything Pompey could do, Crassus could do better – or so he thought. Crassus was not seeking an altercation with the Parthians; on the contrary, he clearly did not give them much thought. He simply wanted to pass through the land and conquer as much of the area as possible with the prospect of very rich pickings and a hero's welcome back in Rome.



A marble bust of Marcus Licinius Crassus



Crassus was determined to outperform his rival Pompey and wanted to emulate Alexander the Great

A year before the Battle of Carrhae, Crassus had looted the Temple of Jerusalem

Perhaps he even dared to imagine his triumphant parade. The Parthians, of course, had other ideas.

Rumours of the great march on Parthia were soon widespread. This motivated ambassadors from Parthia to approach Crassus and put it to him that if his proposed campaign was with Rome's blessing there would be no chance of any kind of truce, but if this was his personal campaign there could be some room for negotiation. Indeed, because of Pompey's successes in that region, Rome and Parthia had treaties in place, respected by both sides.

Crassus arrogantly dismissed them, as indeed he did King Artavasdes II of Armenia, a recent ally of Rome. The king knew the area well and had suggested the terrain was unsuitable for Crassus' redoubtable cavalry and that he should instead make his thrust through Armenia in order to surprise the Parthians.

Crassus, however, was intent on gaining as much of the limelight as possible and had already made his mind up that the route would be through Mesopotamia, which would afford him a much greater arena of triumph. It had become nothing less than an obsession.

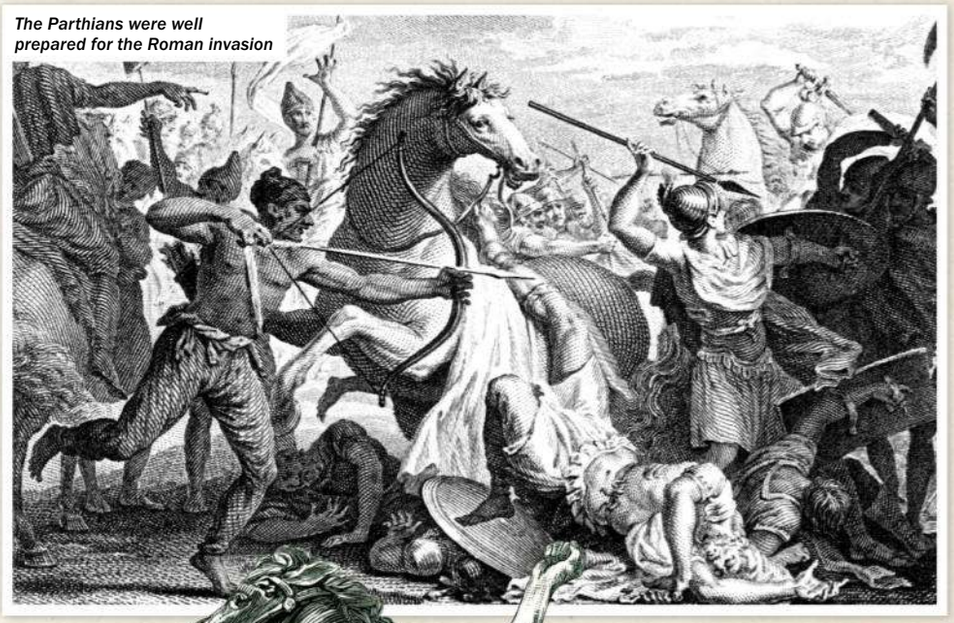
Of course, Crassus had a lot of what we might now call 'clout' and spent months recruiting crack Roman soldiers and ensuring they were fully equipped. This was going to be his moment of triumph and he was determined to milk every possible bit of glory from the campaign.

Meanwhile, the Parthians were not ignoring the potential threat. The aged King Orodes II was a wily monarch who had sanctioned the murder of his father and then his brother in order to seize the throne, which he had achieved a year before Crassus set out to realise his ambition. Orodes II knew his army was a match for anyone and all the more so because of its charismatic leader, Surenas. He was a ruthless and fearless warrior who was not only a supreme battle leader but also an exponent of psychology and kidology.

The Parthians knew what was coming and began the fight long before the Romans set foot on their soil. Crassus set off with his seven legions, light infantry of around 4,000 men and 4,000 cavalry, as soon as spring had turned into summer in 53 BCE. It was a force that would have sent many armies fleeing in all directions, but not the Parthians.

The initial route was through Mesopotamia via a city on the west bank of the famous Euphrates then called Zeugma but today known as the town of Birecik in Turkey. Along the way they were greeted by Ariamnes, an influential Arab chieftain who wished them well and offered some advice. He was in fact an associate of Pompey, but he did not let that get in the way of helping Crassus. He advised that they should not follow the river as that was what the Parthians would be expecting. He told them of an alternative route that would give them an element of surprise. Crassus listened carefully to his new friend and decided that this was excellent advice. Ariamnes wished him all success and departed, riding straight to his Parthian friends to tell them that Crassus had taken the bait.

Already weary under the sun and heat of the arid terrain, the Romans trudged their new route. When news came through that the Parthians had invaded Armenia there was dismay, because it meant that even if it was seriously needed, there was no chance that Artavasdes would be able to send any troops in support of Crassus and his men.



The Parthians were well prepared for the Roman invasion

Crassus was killed during the battle by a Parthian soldier called Pomaxathres

On they went across this open plain until their lead scouts finally saw in the distance a large contingent of what they realised were Parthians. They immediately reported back to Crassus, who was more relieved than daunted, especially since his army appeared to outnumber the Parthians by at least four to one.

Had Crassus been able to see them himself he might have been less confident. What appeared to be a large contingent was actually an enormous one. The scouts had been fooled by the strategy of Surenas, who had ordered his men to cover themselves and their weapons with animal hides. From a distance, this would have made them seem a host of smaller numbers and perhaps little more than a guarded caravan, especially since there was a row of camels, which appeared to be pack animals but were in fact carrying weaponry supplies.

The Parthians were also very well armoured, with their horses covered in thick leather and metal and their riders also clad in chain mail and armed with long spears. This meant that they could attack from distance and take out two or even three men in one charge, using their lances as skewers.

Sensing victory, the Romans were enticed further into the desert. Surenas waited for the perfect moment and then unleashed a merciless attack. One of the techniques used by the Parthians was to stage a feigned retreat on horseback. Convinced they had the Parthians on the run, excited Roman soldiers raced after them, breaking their lines in their haste. The Parthian cavalry then turned in their saddles to aim backwards and with deadly accuracy picked off their disorganised enemy in a hail of arrows. This worked particularly well when Crassus sent his son Publius in pursuit of some retreating Parthians. He was accompanied by around 2,000 men, including 1,300 cavalry and 500 archers. It is thought that none returned.

"THE AGED KING ORODES II WAS A WILY MONARCH WHO HAD SANCTIONED THE MURDER OF HIS FATHER AND THEN HIS BROTHER"

The battle lasted for four days and the reports went from bad to worse. Crassus was dismayed to learn that his son Publius had been captured. He was completely crushed when the head of Publius was openly displayed to the Roman lines as both a taunt and a warning.

Crassus and his army fought on but it was a lost cause. His men were no match for the Parthians, and man after man, horse after horse fell and added their blood to the pools soaking into the sand. Finally, Crassus himself fell, and his severed head was taken as a trophy and put on show at the banquet of celebration later held in Armenia. Honours were bestowed upon Pomaxathres, the soldier who had killed and beheaded Crassus.

More than 40,000 had followed Crassus but only a handful remained to tell the tale. It had been a foolish endeavour, an ego trip into disaster. Worst of all, it was an embarrassment to Rome.

In the wake of his stunning victory the legend of Surenas flourished. Hailed as a hero, he was publicly honoured by King Orodes II, who praised his courage. The same paranoid king would order Surenas' execution that same year, so fearful was he of his popularity.

Images: Alamy, Getty

ELIZABETH'S NAVY

SEVEN PROUD DECADES

This new book from Osprey Publishing recounts how the Royal Navy changed and adapted during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, from service in the Cold War and the Falklands to today's modern fleet

WORDS **DR PAUL BROWN**

By the end of the Second World War, Britain's Royal Navy was at the peak of its powers, emerging victorious despite immense adversity in the Pacific, Mediterranean and Atlantic theatres. However, this supremacy on the waves was followed by a period of gradual decline as the huge demands of the global conflict disappeared. This watershed moment for the navy coincided with the start of a new era for the nation, with the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Over the following seven decades, the Royal Navy underwent a huge amount of change, transitioning from a vast imperial fleet that ruled the waves and defended the empire to a smaller but nonetheless potent force. In his new book, *Elizabeth's Navy: Seventy Years of the Postwar Royal Navy,* author and maritime historian Dr Paul Brown retraces the story of the navy – here he shares the stories of seven famous vessels, one from each decade of service to Elizabeth II.

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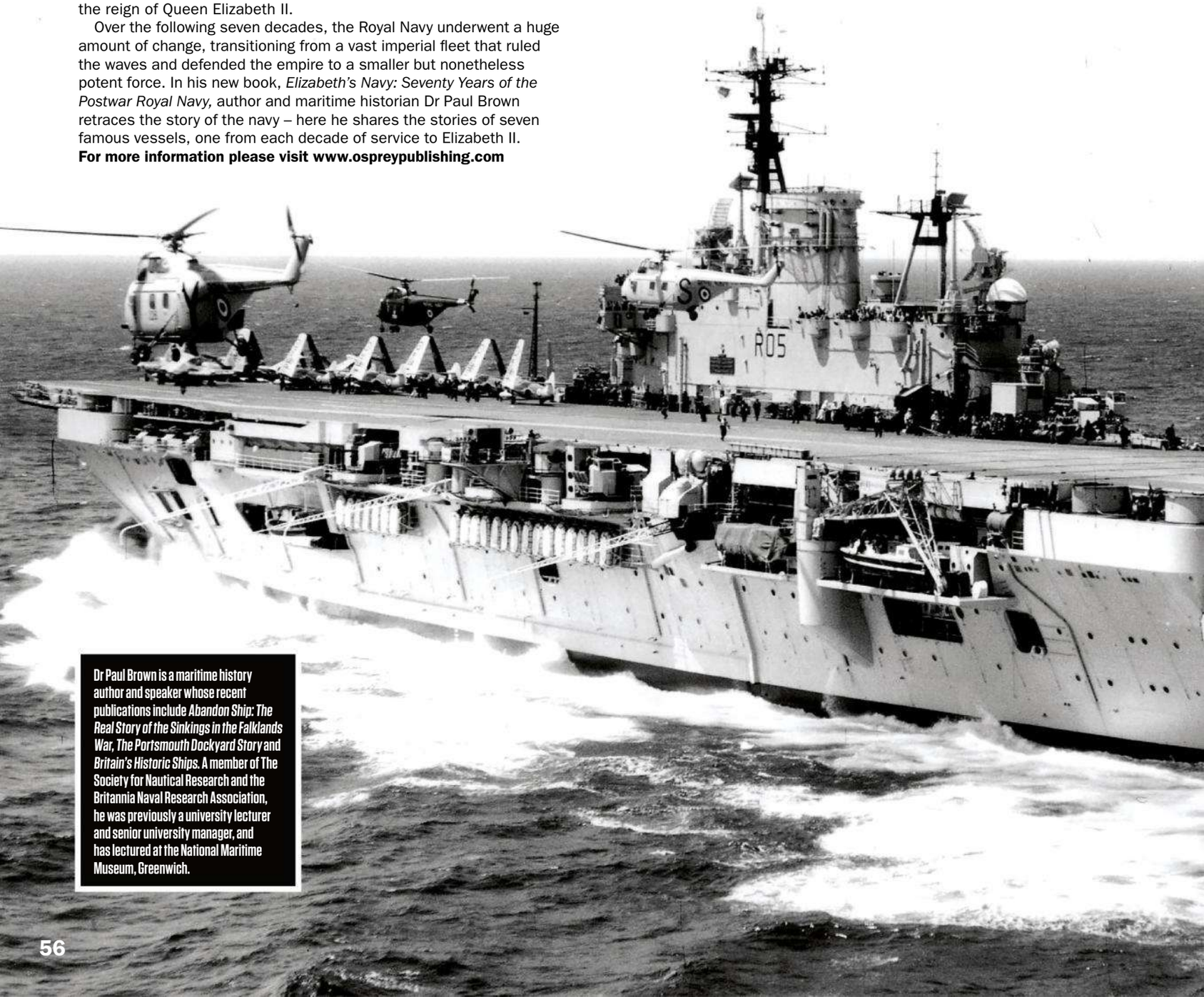
"BRITAIN'S ROYAL NAVY WAS AT THE PEAK OF ITS POWERS, EMERGING VICTORIOUS DESPITE IMMENSE ADVERSITY IN THE PACIFIC, MEDITERRANEAN AND ATLANTIC THEATRES"

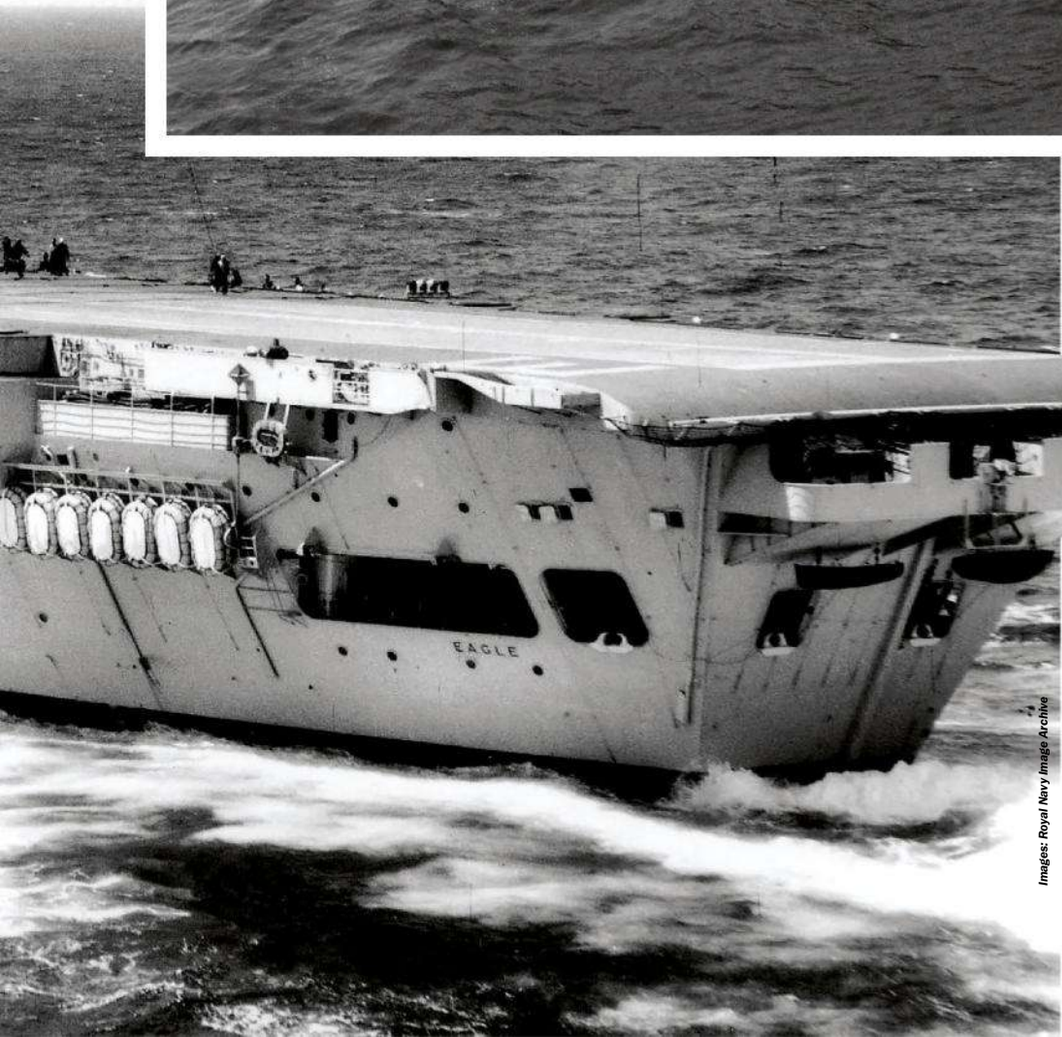


Dr Paul Brown is a maritime history author and speaker whose recent publications include *Abandon Ship: The Real Story of the Sinkings in the Falklands War, The Portsmouth Dockyard Story* and *Britain's Historic Ships.* A member of The Society for Nautical Research and the Britannia Naval Research Association, he was previously a university lecturer and senior university manager, and has lectured at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Images: Royal Navy Image Archive

1960s

Rothesay was the lead ship of the Rothesay class frigates, whose primary role was anti-submarine warfare to counter the growing fleet of fast Soviet submarines. She was completed by Yarrow, Scotstoun, in 1960. Her original armament of a twin 4.5in (114mm) gun forward, twin 1.6in (40mm) gun aft, two Limbo anti-submarine mortars aft and 12 21in (533mm) homing torpedo tubes on the side-decks aft is clearly visible. In 1966-68 she was modernised and equipped with Seacat missiles and a Wasp helicopter.



Images: Royal Navy Image Archive

1950s

The aircraft carrier Eagle was completed in 1951 and after trials and work-up she joined the Home Fleet in March 1952, with Attacker, Sea Hornet, Firefly and Skyraider aircraft embarked. Her first overseas service began in February 1954 when she was deployed to the Mediterranean for four months. During the 1956 Suez campaign the navy's strike force was led by the aircraft carriers Eagle, Albion and Bulwark, flying Sea Venoms and Sea Hawks. Between 1-6 November Eagle launched 621 sorties. Eagle remained one of the navy's main strike carriers until paid off in 1972.

1970s

Antelope, a Type 21 frigate, was completed in 1975. The Type 21s were designed by commercial shipbuilders – Vosper Thornycroft and Yarrow – rather than by the navy's own naval constructors, and had aluminium superstructures rather than steel. They were the first all-gas turbine frigates built for the navy, giving large savings in engine room personnel. They were popular ships in the navy, well-liked for their speed and sleek appearance. Antelope was lost in the Falklands War after being bombed while defending the landings in San Carlos Water.

"ANTELOPE WAS LOST IN THE FALKLANDS WAR AFTER BEING BOMBED WHILE DEFENDING THE LANDINGS IN SAN CARLOS WATER"

1980s

The Trafalgar class nuclear-powered attack submarine Turbulent was completed in 1984 and was equipped to fire Tigerfish torpedoes and Sub-Harpoon anti-ship missiles. Her Cold War roles included trailing Soviet ballistic-missile-armed submarines and protecting the British Resolution class Polaris submarines. In 1997, like other boats in her class (which was a refinement of the Swiftsure class) she was equipped to fire Spearfish torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles. In 2003 she took part in the invasion of Iraq, firing 30 Tomahawks.

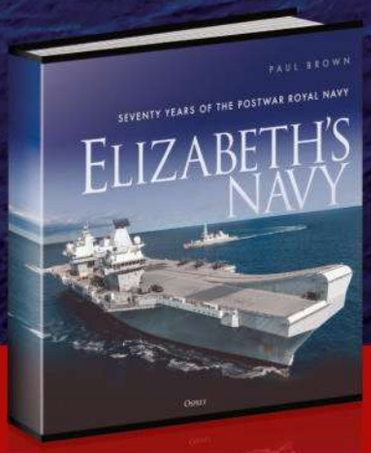
1990s

The first-of-class Trident-missile-armed submarine Vanguard was completed in 1993. Her class was built to replace the Resolution class, providing the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent. The Vanguards were nearly twice the size of the Resolutions, displacing nearly 16,000 tonnes when dived. Each boat was allocated two crews, known as Port and Starboard, which alternated to maximise patrol time and allow for leave and training. There was always at least one of the four Vanguard class on patrol, maintaining the record of uninterrupted deterrent that the Resolution class had achieved.

Images: Crown Copyright

2000s

The landing platform dock Bulwark, also known as an assault ship, and her sister ship Albion were built to replace the assault ships Fearless and Intrepid. Each ship could embark 830 troops and up to 40 trucks and artillery. A large door forward gave access for vehicles to enter from the dockside. A stern door gave access to the floodable dock for the four large landing craft carried, and four smaller troop landing craft were carried in davits. The flight deck could accommodate helicopters as large as Chinooks, though there was no hangar.



FOR MORE SEE PAUL BROWN'S LATEST BOOK, *ELIZABETH'S NAVY: SEVENTY YEARS OF THE POSTWAR ROYAL NAVY*, ON SALE NOW

"EACH SHIP COULD EMBARK 830 TROOPS AND UP TO 40 TRUCKS AND ARTILLERY"

2010s

The Type 45 destroyer Diamond was designed for air defence of the fleet and commissioned in 2011. The silo abaft the 4.5in (114mm) gun had 48 launchers to take both short- and long-range Sea Viper ship-to-air missiles. She was equipped with a flight deck and hangar to embark a Lynx (later Wildcat) or Merlin helicopter. Originally 12 ships of the class were planned, to replace a similar number of Type 42s, but defence cuts meant only six were built. They had a top speed of over 32 knots.

Images: Crown Copyright

17PDR SP M10 ACHILLES

WORDS CRAIG MOORE

This agile British anti-tank weapon packed a fearsome punch in WWII

The 17pdr SP M10 Achilles was designed to be a hard-hitting and manoeuvrable anti-tank gun. The British Army did not use the American term tank destroyer, preferring the term self-propelled gun (SP). British self-propelled anti-tank guns were given names starting with the letter 'A', like Archer, Alecto, Avenger and Achilles. Its thin upper armour meant the Achilles was not designed to be at the front of an attack. In defence it would guard the flanks of a a position and scoot to a new location once it had fired at the approaching enemy before they could return fire.

It also acted as an emergency resource that could be rushed to deal with any enemy breakthrough. The Achilles gun could knock out most German tanks. The British had received a quantity of American-built 3in (76mm) GMC M10 tank destroyers under the Lend-Lease scheme in 1943, and they'd converted 1,100 M10s into the 17pdr Achilles variant by the end of the Second World War. It was hoped they would be ready before D-Day but only 124 had been converted by 6 June 1944. Only 816 had been converted by the end of December 1944.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The name Achilles is controversial. A number of historians state that it was only used after the Second World War, but documents found in the National Archives in London have disproved this. The term was used during the war.

17PDR VS 76MM

The British 17pdr (76mm) round contained 9lb (4kg) of propellant and could fire its projectile at a higher velocity that the US 75mm and 76mm guns, which improved its armour penetrating properties.

© Alamy

With its thin upper armour, it was designed to guard the flank of a position rather than be at the front of an attack

17PDR SP M10 ACHILLES LLC

PRODUCTION	1944
ORIGIN	USA, MODIFIED IN UK
LENGTH	23FT 10IN (7.27M)
MAX SPEED	30MPH (48.3KM/H)
RANGE	200 MILES (322 KM)
ENGINE	GENERAL MOTORS 6046 12-CYLINDER 2-CYCLE TWIN IN-LINE DIESEL 410HP ENGINE
CREW	5 MEN (GUN COMMANDER, GUNNER, LOADER, DRIVER, CO-DRIVER)
MAX ARMOUR	2.2IN (57MM)
PRIMARY WEAPON	QF 17PDR IN TURRET MOUNT, NO3 MK1 IN TURRET

Illustration: Battlefield Design

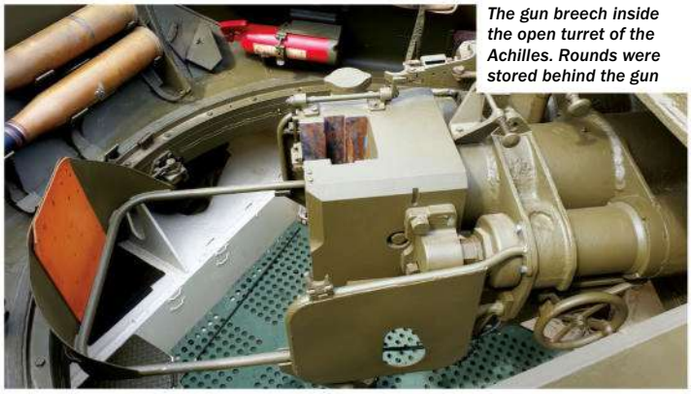
THE TURRET

The turret was open-topped, but a canvas cover could be strapped over it. The lack of an armoured roof reduced the weight of the Achilles but made the crew vulnerable to snipers and high-explosive air-burst shells.

SUSPENSION

The suffixes Ic and IIc relate to the type of counterweight on the rear of the turret. Achilles with the smaller wedge-shaped counterweight were given the suffix Ic. Those with the larger 'duck bill' shaped counterweight were given the suffix IIc.

"IT WOULD GUARD THE FLANKS OF A POSITION AND SCOOT TO A NEW LOCATION ONCE IT HAD FIRED AT THE APPROACHING ENEMY BEFORE THEY COULD RETURN FIRE"



The gun breech inside the open turret of the Achilles. Rounds were stored behind the gun

The loader sat on the right of the gun and the gunner on the left. They both had fold-up seats

ARMAMENT

The Royal Ordnance Quick Firing 17pdr anti-tank gun was mounted in an open-topped turret. It could knock out German heavy armour and was called a 17pdr because that was the weight of the huge shells it fired. The weapon was originally designed as a field gun, and it performed so well in North Africa that the engineers back in Britain came up with the idea of putting it in the new Lend-Lease 3in (76mm) GMC M10 tank destroyer. The American guns were taken out and replaced with these British-made guns in 1,100 vehicles.

To stabilise the main gun a counterweight was added to the end of the barrel

17pdr SP M10 Achilles IIc Battle of the Bulge memorial in La Roche-en-Ardenne, Belgium. (It is missing its turret counterweight)

ENGINE

The 17pdr SP M10 Achilles was powered by a General Motors 6046 12-cylinder 2-cycle twin in-line diesel engine (410hp at 2900rpm). It had a maximum road speed of 30mph (48.3km/h) for short periods but for sustained driving the top road speed was only 25mph (40km/h). This was a lot slower than the M18 Hellcat tank destroyer. The Achilles had a fuel capacity of 165 US gallons (625l) which gave it a cruising range on roads of about 200 miles (322 km).

The engine access hatches on the engine deck were small. The deck had to be removed to replace an engine

***Above:** The 17pdr SP M10 Achilles was powered by a General Motors 6046 12-cylinder 2-cycle twin in-line diesel 410hp engine*

DESIGN

The hull was a completely welded structure, and its armour thickness ranged between 0.4in (9.5mm) to 2.2in (57mm). The thin armour on the side of the turret would only protect the crew from small-arms fire and shrapnel. The hull was divided into two compartments separated by a bulkhead: the fighting and driving compartment at the front and the engine compartment at the rear. The front of the hull sloped downwards at the top and curved at the bottom. A hull machine gun was not fitted to the Achilles.

***Below:** Its thin armour would only give the crew protection from small-arms fire and shrapnel*

Images Alamy

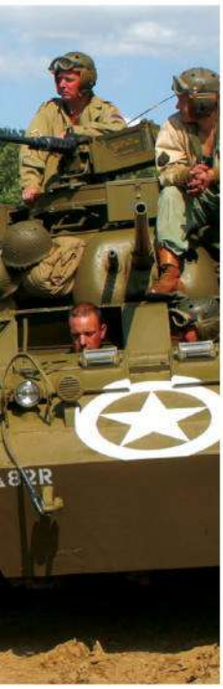
CREW COMPARTMENT

The 17pdr SP M10 Achilles' driver sat on the left at the front of the vehicle and the co-driver was positioned to his right. The driver steered the tank using two large tillers. The co-driver also had two tillers so he could take over driving the vehicle if necessary. The gunner sat on the left of the turret at the front. The gun-commander was positioned behind him and operated the .50 Cal M2 Browning machine gun that was mounted on the left-rear of the turret. The loader's position was on the right of the main gun.

By the end of WWII, the British had converted 1,100 M10s into the Achilles variant

The co-driver sat on the right side of the driver and operated the radio. A hull machine gun was not fitted

The 17pdr SP M10 Achilles' driver's position was on the left of the tank. He used two tillers to drive



SERVICE HISTORY

Achilles-equipped anti-tank regiments of the Royal Artillery and Royal Canadian Artillery were used in fighting from Normandy in June 1944 up until the end of the Second World War. B troop, 245th Battery, 62nd Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery helped stop a counter-attack of a mixed force of German Panzer IV and Panther tanks belonging to 12th SS-Panzer Regiment south of Buron, Normandy, during Operation Carnwood. Thirteen German tanks were knocked out. On 11 January 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge, the British 51st Highland Division was given the task of opening the road to, and then capturing, the town of La Roche-en-Ardenne on the River Ourthe. They were supported by various armoured vehicles, including 17pdr SP M10 Achilles, and on 12 January British units linked up with US 84th Infantry Division. After the Second World War, the Achilles saw service in various armies around the world.

This Achilles is on display at the War Heritage Institute Bastogne Barracks in Belgium

Achilles anti-tank vehicles played a vital role in liberating La Roche-en-Ardenne in January 1945

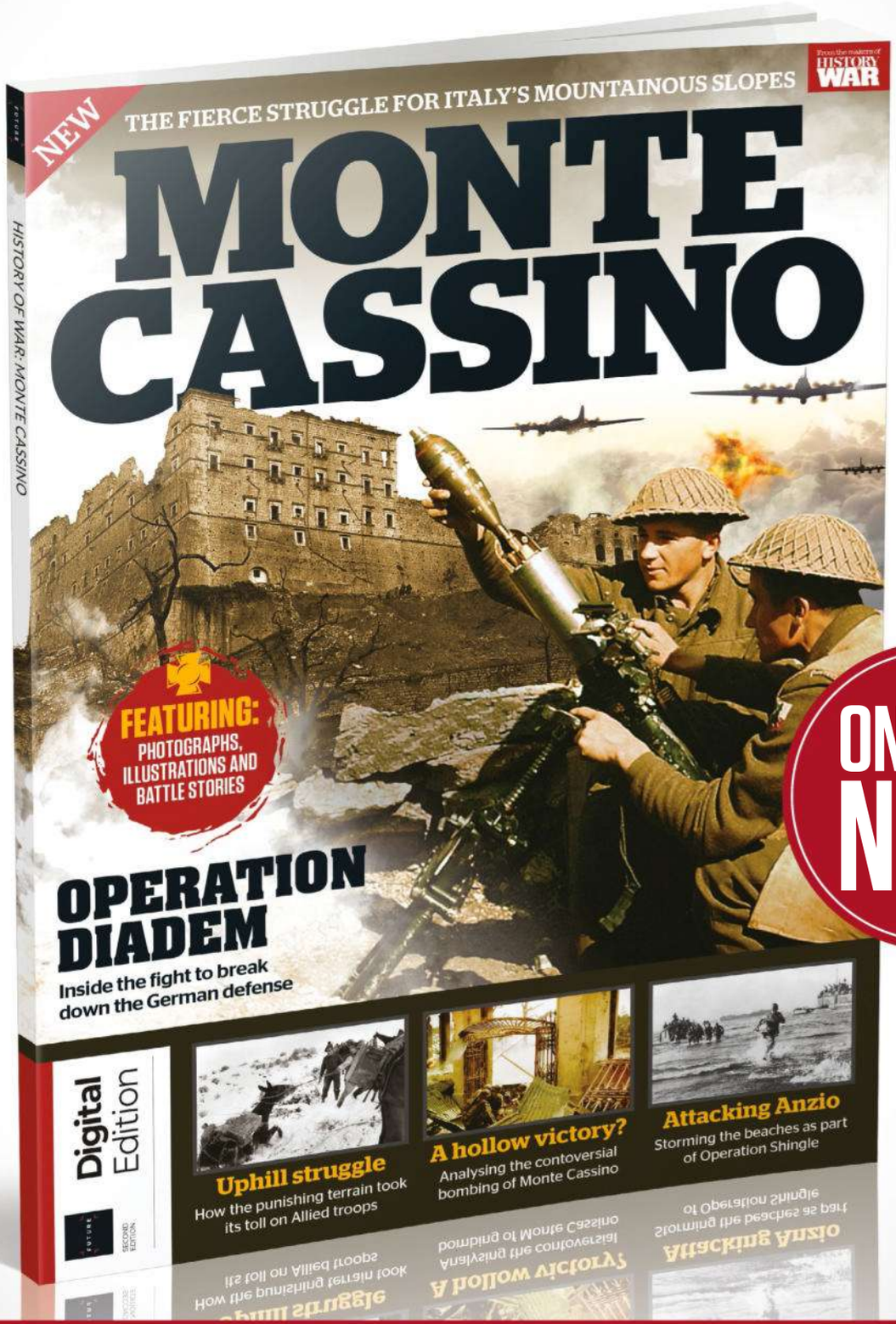
ACHILLES TANK DESTROYER MK10
HONOUR AND TRIBUTE TO THE
1ST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE YEOMANRY
WHO SUPPORTED THE
51ST HIGHLAND DIVISION
IN THE LIBERATION OF LA ROCHE
ON 11TH JANUARY 1945

This 17pdr SP M10 Achilles is designated an IIc because it has a 'duckbill' counterweight at the rear of the turret

Images Alamy

THE FIERCE STRUGGLE FOR ITALY'S MOUNTAINOUS SLOPES

Explore this complete guide to the Battle of Monte Cassino, one of World War II's bloodiest battles, from the Anzio beach assault to the controversial Allied bombing campaign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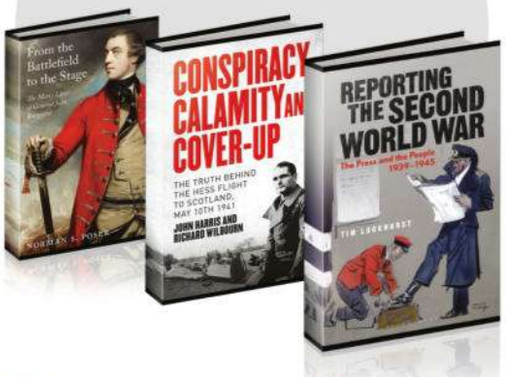
From the Battlefield to the Stage
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Artefact of War: Dragoon helmet

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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover Jacobites in Derby, a beautiful castle in Powis and Reading's remarkable Victorian replica of the Bayeux Tapestry

The replica tapestry is displayed in the specially designed Bayeux Gallery

Reading's replica tapestry

Reading Museum contains a full-size recreation of the Bayeux Tapestry that was made by skilled embroiderers during the 1880s

Located a short walk from the town's major railway station, Reading Museum is situated within Reading Town Hall. Containing galleries describing the history of Reading and the surrounding area, the museum has been open since 1883.

One of the museum's most famous exhibits is an accurate replica of the Bayeux Tapestry. It was made in Staffordshire in the 1880s by 35 women of the Leek Embroidery Society and is the only known full-size woven copy of the original tapestry in existence.

Measuring 230ft (70m) long, the tapestry depicts the events of the Norman Conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy in 1066. Told from the Norman perspective, the tapestry's details include the preparations for war and William's decisive victory against King Harold II of England at the Battle of Hastings. The original tapestry was probably made in England a few years after 1066, although it was sent to Normandy shortly afterwards. It now resides in a special museum in Bayeux.

The replica resides in Reading Museum because the area has direct links with the Norman Conquest. William's youngest son King Henry I of England founded Reading Abbey in 1121 for (in his words) "the salvation of my soul, and the souls of King William, my father, and of King William [II], my brother… and all my ancestors and successors". The abbey became one of Europe's largest royal monasteries, with Henry I being buried there in 1135. Henry I was a successful military commander himself and ruled England for much longer than his father and elder brother.

Every Saturday from 2-3pm there are guided tours of the replica tapestry that are led by museum staff. These tours are suitable for all ages, and on Saturday 6 May 2023 there will be a special day of events called Bayeux in Britain at Reading Museum. Running from 10am-4pm, it will feature the museum's extensive collection of medieval artefacts and includes a lecture and visit to the remains of Reading Abbey.

The lecture will be about the original tapestry's creation, its later history as propaganda by Napoleon and why the replica was made in the 19th century. The walk around the abbey will include visits to the one remaining gate, monks' quarters, the hospitium (guest house), chapter house and the site of Henry I's tomb. A further gallery tour will focus on the replica tapestry with an emphasis on how much of its interpretation of the Battle of Hastings matches other historical sources.

***Right, above:** The replica's depiction of the famous tapestry scene showing King Harold II reputedly being killed by an arrow to the head*

***Right:** Reading Museum is located inside the Grade II-listed town hall, which is famous for its distinctive Victorian Gothic Revival architecture*

For more information visit www.readingmuseum.org.uk

Images: Alamy

‘These Vagabond Creatures’

Derby Museum and Art Gallery is hosting a lecture about the city’s brief occupation by the Jacobites in 1745

During the 1745 Jacobite Uprising, Prince Charles Edward Stuart (aka Bonnie Prince Charlie) achieved unlikely military success against King George II’s government forces in a bid to restore the Stuarts to the British throne. After occupying Edinburgh, Charles marched south into England with the aim of capturing London, recruiting English volunteers along the way.

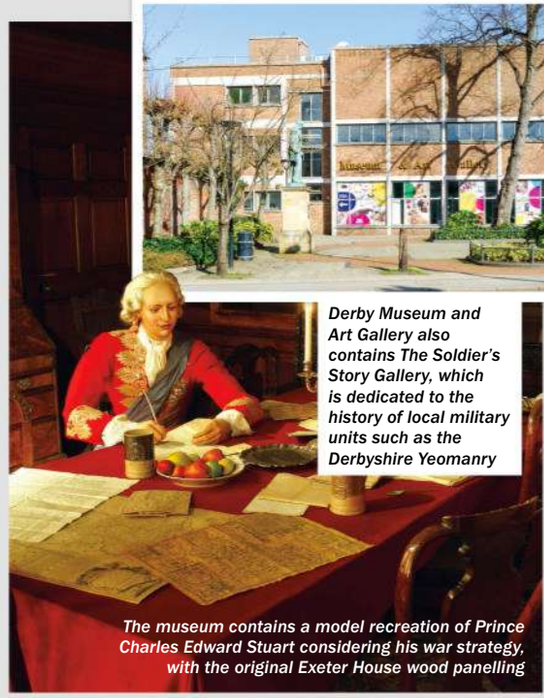
Charles failed to enlist many men as he marched through northern England before his mostly Scottish Jacobite army reached Derby on 4 December. The Jacobites stayed in the city for just two days but in that time Charles and his commanders made the fateful decision to return to Scotland. This decision ultimately resulted in the Jacobites’ final defeat at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746.

At 2pm on Saturday 29 April, Lucy Bamford, senior curator of Art at Derby Museum and Art Gallery, will present a lecture called These Vagabond Creatures: The Jacobite Army in Derby in 1745. Bamford will explore the surviving eyewitness accounts and press reports of the Jacobites’ occupation of the city ranging from spies to shock, outrage and even farce.

The museum also houses a small collection relating to 1745 called Bonnie Prince Charlie. Collection highlights include the original wood panelling from Exeter House (the building where the Jacobite War Council was held), Jacobite medals and period furniture dating from the mid-1700s.

For more information visit www.derbymuseums.org

Derby Museum and Art Gallery also contains The Soldier’s Story Gallery, which is dedicated to the history of local military units such as the Derbyshire Yeomanry



The museum contains a model recreation of Prince Charles Edward Stuart considering his war strategy, with the original Exeter House wood panelling

Powis Castle

The magnificent home of the Herbert family was built by a Welsh prince and contains a collection of Asian artefacts amassed by Clive of India

Located near Welshpool, Powis Castle has been both a fortress and grand country house over the centuries. The present castle was built during the 13th century by Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys Wenwynwyn. This was unusual because most castles in the border Marches at this time were constructed by Anglo-Norman barons rather than Welsh princes. Nevertheless, the castle thrived and is now the hereditary seat of the Herbert earls of Powis, although the property is managed by the National Trust.

The castle survived the English conquest of Wales, Owain Glyndwr’s Revolt and the British Civil Wars to be transformed from a border fortress to an aristocratic country home. Both the castle and gardens are Grade I-listed, with the latter being one of the very few surviving British Baroque gardens.

Powis also contains the Clive Museum, a collection of Asian artefacts amassed during the British colonisation of India during the 18th century. This includes items that were taken from the subcontinent by Major General Robert Clive (aka Clive of India) whose son Edward married Henrietta (née Herbert), Countess of Powis in 1784. The museum shows how the often violent legacy of the British Empire continues to be visible in Britain today. The importance of understanding how such precious objects came to be at Powis reinforces the National Trust’s mission for new research into the country’s colonial history.

For more information visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

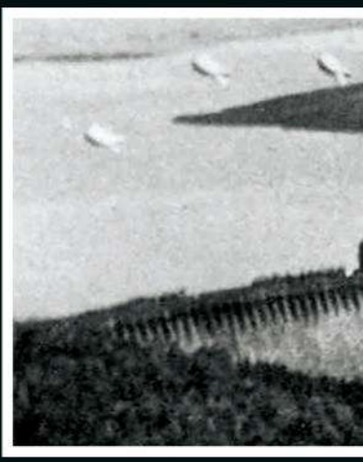
Powis Castle’s gardens are listed on the Cadw/International Council on Monuments and Sites Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales

Tipu’s Tiger Head is in the Clive Museum and is set with rubies, diamonds and emeralds

Images: Alamy

WWII THIS MONTH...

MAY 1943



To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict

LIBERATION OF TUNISIA

At the beginning of May 1943, British-led Allied soldiers launched the final ground attacks against German and Italian forces in Tunisia. Axis troops were positioned in defensive pockets at Tunis, Cape Bon and Bizerte.

Operations Vulcan and Strike saw British and American forces overcome the Axis positions during 22 April to 12 May 1943. German commander General Hans-Jürgen von Arnim surrendered on 12 May and all remaining Axis forces commanded by Italian Marshal Giovanni Messe capitulated the following day. Almost 240,000 German and Italian soldiers were captured, with Tunis being liberated. It was the end of both the Tunisian and North African Campaigns.

Images © Alamy, Getty

DAMBUSTERS RAID

Codenamed Operation Chastise, the Dambusters Raid saw RAF 617 Squadron conduct an audacious bombing raid in the industrial heart of Germany on the night of 16-17 May 1943. Led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson, 617's aim to was to destroy three dams with secret 'bouncing bombs'.

Nineteen Lancaster bombers flew against the heavily defended dams, with eight aircraft being lost and 53 aircrew killed. Nevertheless, the attack breached two of the dams, which caused huge flooding. Approximately 1,600 civilians (including 1,000 slave labourers) were killed and German production in the area did not fully resume until September 1943. Gibson was awarded the Victoria Cross for his leadership.

The breached Möhne dam pictured the day after the raid by an RAF reconnaissance Spitfire

Victorious English soldiers are greeted by jubilant civilians as they enter Tunis, 7 May 1943

AHS CENTAUR SINKING

Built as a British passenger and cargo ship, MV Centaur was given to the Australian government and converted into a hospital ship in early 1943. Now known as AHS Centaur, the vessel was relaunched in March 1943 to help treat and transport wounded Allied personnel from the New Guinea Campaign.

During its second hospital voyage from Sydney to Papua New Guinea, Centaur was torpedoed by Japanese submarine I-177 and sank within three minutes. Of the 332 people on board, only 64 were rescued. There were 12 nurses on Centaur but only one – Sister Ellen Savage – survived. The sinking was a war crime under the 1907 Hague Convention but no Japanese sailors were ever put on trial.

Sister Ellen Savage was awarded the George Medal for tending to the wounded, despite the fact that she was herself badly injured during the sinking of Australian Hospital Ship Centaur

THIRD WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

A strategic meeting during 12-25 May 1943, the Third Washington Conference was held between the American and British governments. Headed by President Franklin D Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the conference was held at both the White House and Federal Reserve Building in Washington DC.

Topics that were discussed included the upcoming Allied invasion of Sicily, plans for the Normandy landings and aid to China. At this point, it was agreed that the Normandy landings would be postponed until May 1944 due to lack of supplies. The conference saw a subtle change in world leadership as the Americans gained influence over other Allied countries while the British had to compromise on several military requests.

During the conference, Winston Churchill addressed a joint session of Congress on 19 May 1943

PORAJMOS AT AUSCHWITZ

On 25 May 1943, a group of 1,035 Roma people were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau by SS personnel. Historically known as 'Gypsies', Roma and Sinti people were marked with black triangles and were imprisoned in an area known as the Zigeunerlager (Gypsy Camp). They were victims of the Porajmos (The Devouring) – a Nazi genocide against Europe's Romani people.

Roma and Sinti people had been classified by the Nazis as "enemies of the race-based state" since 1935. This placed them in the same category as Jews and they suffered the same persecution. Approximately 200,000-500,000 Roma and Sinti were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators.

Anna Maria 'Settela' Steinbach (1934-44), a nine year-old Dutch Sinti girl, looks out of a train destined for Auschwitz

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books and films

WAR SAILOR

A COMPELLING TESTAMENT TO THE NORWEGIAN MEN AND WOMEN WHO KEPT BRITAIN AFLOAT IN HER HOUR OF NEED

Director: Gunnar Vikene Starring: Kristoffer Joner, Pål Sverre Hagen, Ine Marie Wilmann, Henrikke Lund Olsen Released: Out Now

"After the Germans occupied Norway," says the Norwegian ship captain to *War Sailor*'s main character Alfred (Kristoffer Joner), "the crown decided to commandeer all our merchant vessels to sail for the Allies. So now it's official. We're at war."

It was to be a war that their ship's crew and those of some 1,000 other Norwegian vessels would contribute to on an unprecedented scale, yet also a war that would ultimately be quick to forget their outstanding role. It is an overlooked fact that Norwegian merchant sailors supplied around half of Britain's vital materiel between 1939 and 1945, and few depictions telling this story have made it to screens – until now.

War Sailor opens seven months before the German occupation of Norway, as Alfred struggles to find enough work to feed his wife Cecilia (Ine Marie Wilmann) and three children, including daughter Magdeli (Henrikke Lund Olsen). Offered the chance to join the merchant navy with his best friend Sigbjørn (Pål Sverre Hagen), Alfred must determine whether being separated from his beloved family for at least a year-and-a-half is worth the steady income of life at sea. Such difficult decisions are a keystone element of the entire series, kickstarted by Alfred's departure for the unforgiving waters of the Atlantic.

Eight months later, amid the turmoil of convoys travelling across oceans where U-Boats lurk beneath the waves, Alfred and Sigbjørn come face-to-face with the harsh realities of the conflict. Here, deft camera work, claustrophobic settings and ominous lighting converge to create a palpable tension that hits home the extraordinarily high stakes.

There is likewise a sense of hopelessness in the crew's plight, several of whom would prefer to go ashore but run the risk of being branded as traitors if they do. Nor is the tragic reality that war affects all ages overlooked – one sailor is just 14 years old.

The men and women of Norway's merchant fleet nevertheless steam ahead, their journey over several years spanning from Malta to Liverpool to New York City and beyond. They collectively undergo a change over that period, highlighted perhaps most hauntingly when a comrade is playfully thrown into shallow waters, only for him to let out a blood-curdling scream as his deep-seated fears burst onto the surface.

Such emotional depth extends to the leading ensemble cast throughout *War Sailor*, especially when Alfred's daughter, played by

"NORWEGIAN MERCHANT SAILORS SUPPLIED AROUND HALF OF BRITAIN'S VITAL MATERIEL BETWEEN 1939 AND 1945"

a young Lund Olsen with sublime gravitas, is confronted by the prospect that her father might never return.

Twist follows twist, each more devastating than the last. The series then jumps into a post-war world with complex challenges of its own, not least how once-strong bonds can be forged, broken and reforged – or sometimes lost forever.

War Sailor is not a typical war series and doesn't pretend to be. It's a tale of humanity at its worst and finest, a comprehensive exploration of Norway's incredible naval efforts that never ceases to lose sight of the individuals caught up in its wake. Like the sailors themselves, viewers must weather the storm of pain and loss, of friendship and family, and, on a fundamental level, the lengths people would go to survive in body and spirit. **AB**

FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO THE STAGE

AN ENLIGHTENING STUDY OF THE MANY FASCINATING LIVES OF GENERAL JOHN BURGOYNE, A SADLY NEGLECTED BRITISH MILITARY FIGURE

Author: Norman S Poser Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press
Price: £27.99 (Hardback)

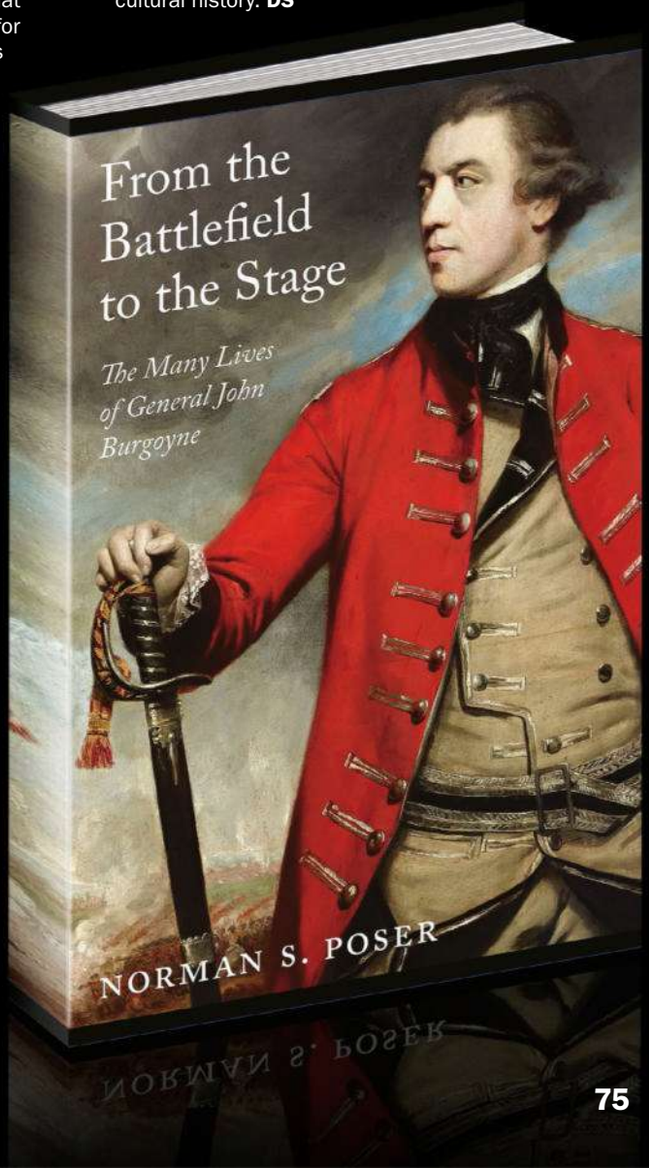
Historians wishing to write about John Burgoyne have a hurdle to overcome – a lack of primary source material upon which to draw. This has deterred most from even trying and the result is that Norman S Poser's book is the first for more than 30 years to focus on this controversial British general.

The other stumbling block is the crowning failure of Burgoyne's career – his defeat and surrender at Saratoga in 1777 during the American War of Independence. This was such a catastrophe it tends to overshadow all other aspects of the man's life and career.

This is a shame because, as Poser makes clear in this engaging and highly readable book, Burgoyne was a fascinating character. An accomplished playwright, a deep-thinker on military matters (especially when concerned with the treatment of the common soldier, where Burgoyne was unusually moderate), and a brave and daring commander, he is very much the sort of figure who deserves to take centre stage in his own story, rather than being the hapless sidekick in others.

The greatest strength of this book is how much time Poser devotes to Burgoyne's life before and after the thunderclap of Saratoga. Clearly an engaging man (he won over the father of the woman he eloped with) the impression created is of a character whose company was very agreeable.

For students of the War of Independence, *From the Battlefield to the Stage* is essential reading, but it will also appeal to anyone with a wider interest in 18th century cultural history. **DS**



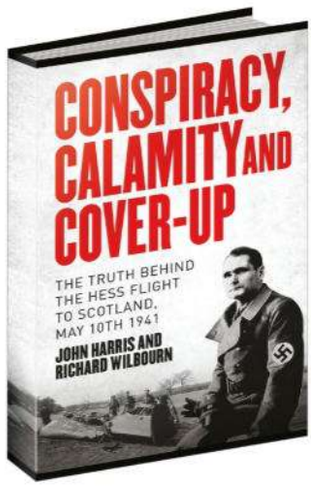
CONSPIRACY, CALAMITY AND COVER-UP

DISSECTING THE STRANGE CASE OF RUDOLF HESS AND THE TRUTH BEHIND HIS FLIGHT TO SCOTLAND IN MAY 1941

Authors: John Harris and Richard Wilbourn **Publisher:** Uniform **Price:** £35 (Hardback)

The fascination with the bizarre case of leading Nazi Rudolf Hess remains undiminished. Historians have long grappled with the question of exactly why Adolf Hitler's right-hand man took it upon himself to single-handedly fly to Scotland, purportedly to somehow negotiate peace between Germany and Britain. What followed has all the makings of a James Bond movie. After bailing out, Hess was captured and met with Wing Commander the Duke of Hamilton. The latter was extremely surprised to learn Hess had been trying to contact him for some time with a view to ending the war. By this stage, though, Hess was too late as Winston Churchill was determined to make a stand. Hitler's reaction to the defection was to declare Hess delusional and that he had lost his mind – otherwise his betrayal was too much to bear.

Over the years Hess' actions have generated numerous conspiracy theories, not least that the man who landed in Scotland was a double who was part some sort of coup being plotted at the heart of the British establishment. It has also been argued that Hess' arrival came at an inconvenient time for Churchill, who was busy wooing President Franklin D Roosevelt. The presence of Hess distracted from the narrative of Britain heroically holding out alone until the New World came to the rescue. But nothing came of Hess' daring mission and he was subsequently tried at Nuremberg, eventually taking his own life under suspicious circumstances in Spandau Prison in 1987. As authors John Harris and Richard Wilbourn readily admit: "This is not an easy subject to decipher."


CONSPIRACY, CALAMITY AND COVER-UP
THE TRUTH BEHIND THE HESS FLIGHT TO SCOTLAND, MAY 10TH 1941
JOHN HARRIS AND RICHARD WILBOURN

However, they are no strangers to the Hess story, having already written six books on it. Their latest volume is clearly the culmination of all their years of diligent research, and they leave no proverbial stone unturned in their quest to answer exactly what happened and why. They frame their account as if it were a trial, first presenting the evidence in great detail then drawing their conclusions. As the authors explain: "We merely invite you to read our book and decide for yourself as to our findings about Hess."

Despite their guidance the Hess plot is so dense and intricate that, as they admit, it's difficult to draw any hard and fast conclusions from the myriad plot strands. A slight gripe is the lack of an index, which would've served to guide the reader and anyone wanting to use this book for reference. Churchill wrote: "I never attached any serious importance to this escapade." He was of course right – at the time Britain was struggling to hold the line in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean and one man acting without Hitler's authority was hardly going to change the course of history. However, if you are looking for an insightful and informative read that comprehensively addresses the Hess saga then look no further. **ATJ**

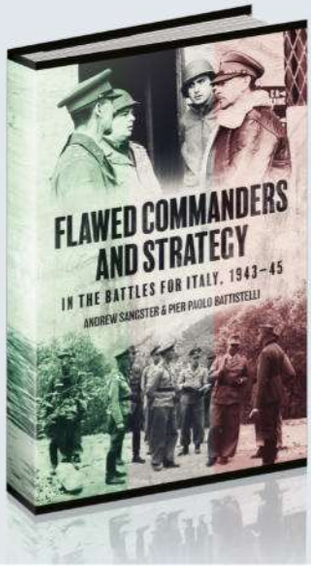
FLAWED COMMANDERS AND STRATEGY IN THE BATTLES FOR ITALY, 1943-45

HAILED AS THE FIRST BREAKTHROUGH INTO HITLER'S 'FORTRESS EUROPE', THE ALLIES' ITALIAN CAMPAIGN BECAME A SIDESHOW AFTER D-DAY. THIS BOOK EXAMINES ALL THE TOP GENERALS INVOLVED AND PAINTS A PICTURE OF COLLECTIVE FAILURE

Authors: Andrew Sangster and Pier Paolo Battistelli **Publisher:** Casemate **Price:** £25 (Hardback)

The tens of thousands of Allied soldiers who took part in the Italian Campaign were disparaged as 'D-day dodgers', a grossly unfair description of the men who fought one of the toughest and least understood episodes of the Second World War. The authors here deserve credit for shining a light on the fighting and showing how the main Allied commanders involved didn't do themselves any credit in what was often a bungled and hesitant campaign.

Harold Alexander – often lauded as the perfect English gentleman – was too vague in his orders and lacked grip, while Bernard Montgomery – the hero of El Alamein – was over-cautious and determined to protect his reputation. The Americans don't get away scot-free either, with George Patton revealed as an impetuous egotist and Mark Clark judged an ardent Anglophobe desperate to bathe in the glow of positive press.



Using archives from the times, as well as a wealth of diaries, letters and other first-hand material, the authors set out the case for the fighting in Italy to be seen as a period of missed opportunities, with responsibility for that resting on the shoulders of a raft of senior figures. Interestingly, the overall German commander in the theatre – the Luftwaffe's 'Smiling Albert' Kesselring – comes out as a far better field commander than his opponents, while the level of discord between the British and Americans is covered in detail and exposed as sometimes reaching almost vitriolic heights. There are a few photos and maps included, but a few more to help illustrate the difficulties of the campaign and the personalities involved would've been beneficial. **JT**

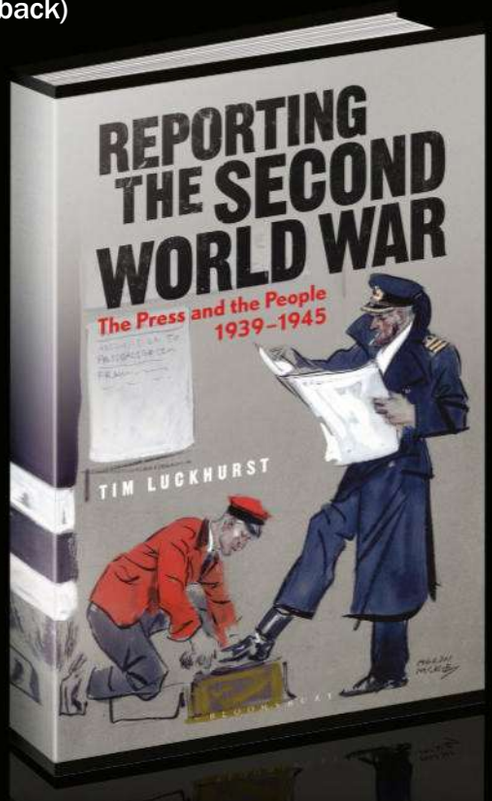
Newspapers were a vital source of information for the British people during WWII

© Alamy

REPORTING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

ANALYSING THE DECISIVE ROLE OF BRITAIN'S NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM IN SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Author: Tim Luckhurst **Publisher:** Bloomsbury
Price: £22.49 (Paperback)



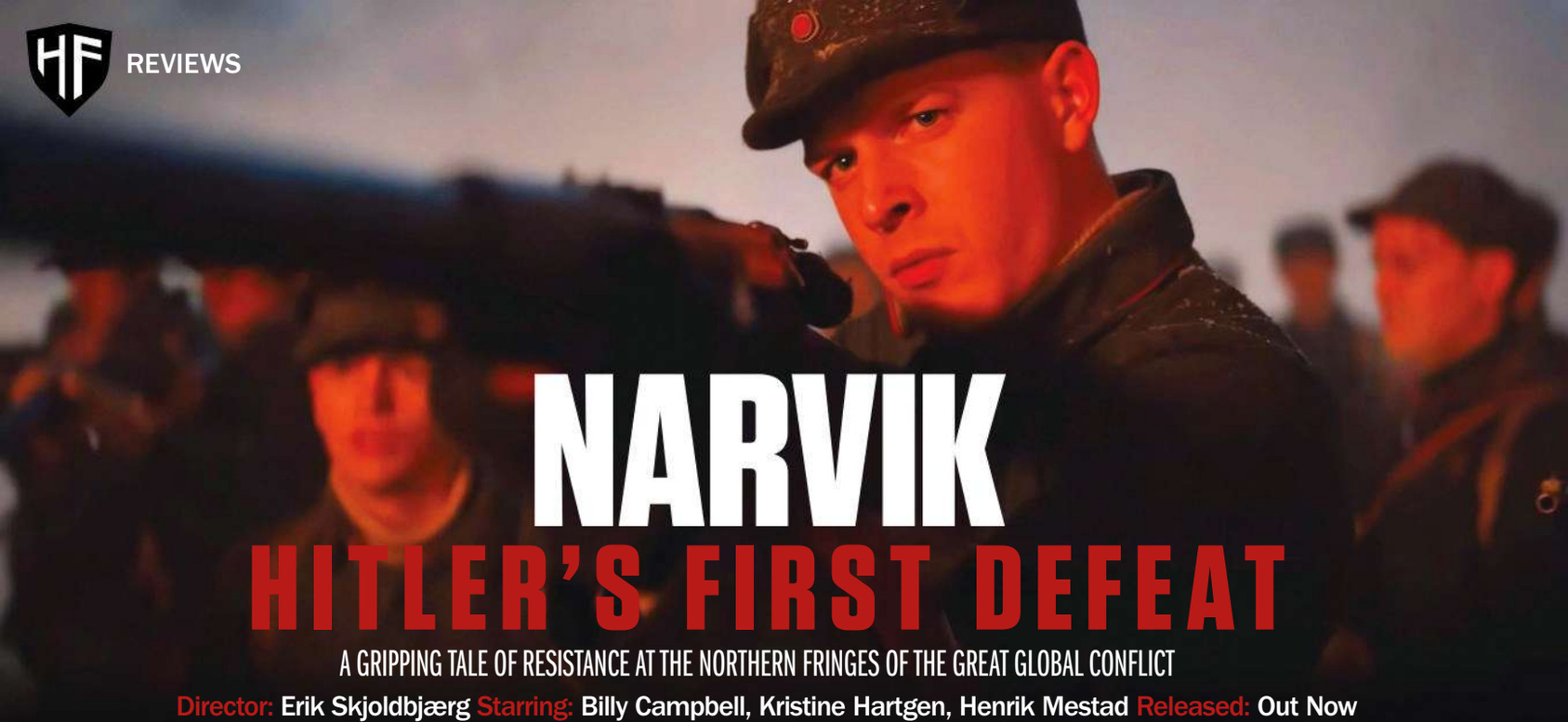
Tim Luckhurst brings together his skills as an award-winning journalist to offer case studies of newspaper coverage during the Second World War, drawing on his experiences covering wars and conflict in hotspots like Romania, Iraq, Kuwait, Kosovo, Northern Ireland and Serbia.

While the BBC's broadcast journalism during the Second World War has been extensively explored, newspaper reporting on the conflict has until now received less attention. Luckhurst's effort to address this issue marks an important step forward in the study of British print media during the conflict, for at the time Briton's were the world's most avid newspaper readers.

The book examines what news can do for democracy, from the duty to inform readers about what they need to know to investigating topics that the government prefers not to discuss, and mobilising readers to take action or protest.

The narrative looks at the tone and precision of coverage of key events, such as the Battle of Britain. Luckhurst brings to light front-page reports on 11 July 1940, the day the onslaught began. Each paper explodes with patriotic fervour, though the disparity in battle figures reflects a greater adherence to accuracy by *The Yorkshire Post* than the *Mirror*, while others blend precision and patriotism in their summary of the Air Ministry's official briefing.

While newspapers did not always cover themselves in investigative glory, they remained the best available source of information about British and international affairs. They could and did challenge government on topics about which their readers cared deeply. There is no doubt, the author says, that they saw themselves as the government's partners in the national effort to defeat Adolf Hitler and defend democracy. **JS**



NARVIK

HITLER'S FIRST DEFEAT

A GRIPPING TALE OF RESISTANCE AT THE NORTHERN FRINGES OF THE GREAT GLOBAL CONFLICT

Director: Erik Skjoldbjærg **Starring:** Billy Campbell, Kristine Hartgen, Henrik Mestad **Released:** Out Now

Narvik tells a much-overlooked story from the first year of the Second World War at the frosty northern edge of the conflict. *Kampen om Narvik* (*The Battle for Narvik*) – the film's Norwegian title – depicts the fighting from 9 April to 27 May 1940 around Narvik, an important ice-free port in northern Norway. Its location at the head of a long fjord meant that Swedish iron ore could be transported to the port by rail and then shipped around the world.

In September 1939, Sweden and Norway were neutral when Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Nazis relied upon an uninterrupted supply of Swedish iron ore to keep their vast military factories working to full capacity, producing everything from bayonets, rifles and machine guns to warships, aircraft, tanks and U-boats.

After attacking Norway in early April 1940, the Germans quickly occupied Narvik, but some Norwegian troops escaped to the mountains, from where they could mount resistance. With the help of the Royal Navy and French, Polish and British troops, Narvik was recaptured on 28 May and the battle is considered Hitler's first defeat. This show of resistance and brief victory is rightly held as an important part of Norway's history but is often overshadowed by the allegations of collaboration with the Nazi regime by Vidkun Quisling's wartime government of Norway.

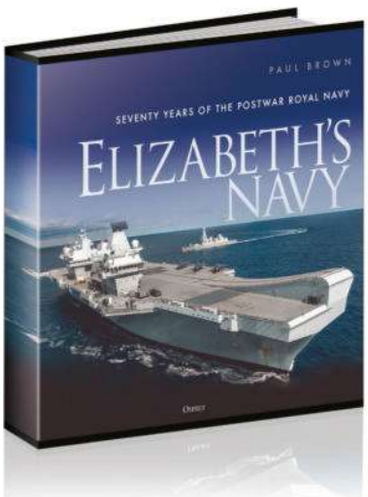
The movie focuses on events from the Norwegian view point and how they affected the people of Narvik. A young woman who speaks German is used as an interpreter, which causes problems for her and her family later as she is considered a traitor. Her husband is a soldier stationed in the local barracks, and the narrative follows his unit's march into the mountains and their attempt to blow up the railway bridge that's used to transport the Swedish iron ore to the port. The story culminates with the battle to retake the town. What is unexpected and rarely seen in other films is the portrayal of French Alpine troops, wearing sheepskin jackets, who fought alongside the Norwegian soldiers. Despite the victory, the film also portrays how after the German defeat the Luftwaffe exacted revenge on the town, bombing the centre and reducing most of it to rubble. **CM**

© Alamy

ELIZABETH'S NAVY

A NOSTALGIC OVERVIEW OF THE LAST 70 YEARS OF THE ROYAL NAVY

Author: Dr Paul Brown
Publisher: Osprey Publishing
Price: £40.50 (Hardback)
Released: 13 April 2023



It's not by accident that the title of Dr Paul Brown's new book links two of the most enduring symbols of British 'hard' and 'soft' power in the last 70 years: the Royal Navy and Queen Elizabeth II. The decline and final end of the British Empire over the course of the 20th century was nowhere more evident than in the shrinking of the Royal Navy – a force that in 1952, at the start of the late queen's reign, numbered over 300 warships and more than 150,000 personnel. In contrast, today, as the author so forensically analyses, the navy has more admirals than warships, and many vessels are various states of arduous repair and refit.

Dr Brown's introduction perfectly sets out the course of his part timeline, part critical study, which narrates the navy's major conflicts and encounters, and details its famous and notable warships during the queen's reign. As well as providing glorious photography, with accompanying insightfully detailed and intensely knowledgeable commentary, the author also highlights the social and structural changes the Royal Navy underwent in each period. By 1970, for instance, the traditional daily ration of rum, afforded to ratings since before Nelson's time, was gone, while the historically class-centric (as well as male-centric) hierarchy has also fallen away. These at least were some great breaks from tradition during the last 70 years that are unarguably appropriate.

Dr Brown's clear passion and in-depth expertise make for a thoroughly enjoyable read that's as much to inform opinion as it is to entertain nostalgia. It is highly recommended to anyone interested in and concerned with the history – and future – of the navy that once ruled the waves. **TW**

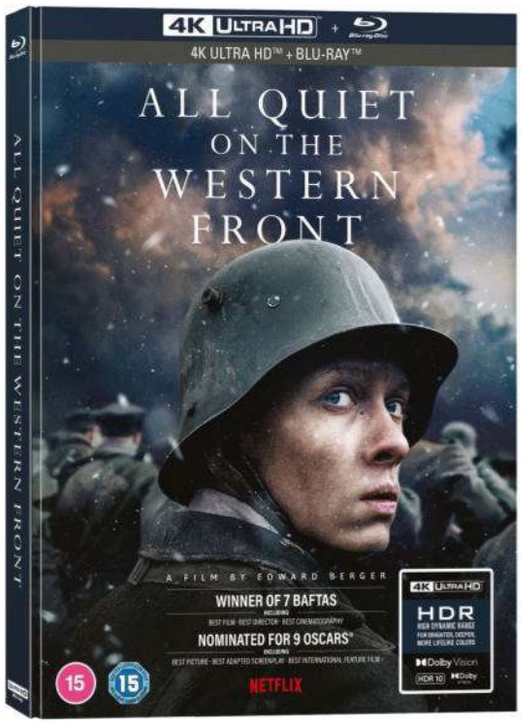
Images: Netflix

WIN A COPY OF ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

History of War readers have the chance to win a limited edition copy of 2022's Oscar-winning war epic, now out on HD Blu-ray

A retelling of Erich Maria Remarque's 1928 anti-war novel, *All Quiet On The Western Front* follows the story of Paul Bäumer, a young German who in 1917 joins his group of friends in volunteering for the army, with the expectation of victory and glory for the Fatherland. However, soon after arriving on the frontline, Paul and his comrades are thrust into the grim realities of trench warfare and learn first-hand the brutal and seemingly irrational way in which the war is being waged. All the while, negotiations for an Armistice are being held, with every minute spent costing more lives lost, as the final fruitless offensives of the war are played out.

This year *All Quiet On The Western Front* made history as the first German production to be nominated for Best Feature at the Academy Awards. On the night it won four awards for international feature, production design, score and cinematography. Originally released to streaming on Netflix, the film is now available in 4K Ultra HD and Blu-ray, with an additional booklet featuring an interview with director Edward Berger. In this issue, two **History of War** readers can each win a copy of this 2-Disc Limited Collector's Edition, worth £34.99.



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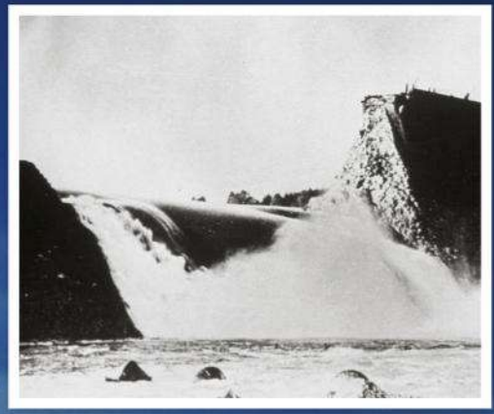

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DRAGOON HELMET

This cavalry headpiece was worn by a British Army officer at a battle in Germany, during the Seven Years' War

Fought in Hesse, Germany, on 16 July 1760, the Battle of Emsdorf was a clash between French and Anglo-Hanoverian forces. Evenly numbered at c.3,000 troops on each side, the 'French' soldiers were actually Germans in French service who were commanded by Baron Christian-Sigismund von Glaubwitz. The opposing force, which was led by Frederick II, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel was also primarily German with Hanoverian and Hessian troops. Only one unit in Frederick's force was British: the 15th Light Dragoons.

Dragoons were mounted infantry that were trained in combat with swords and firearms. At Emsdorf, the disciplined 15th Light Dragoons surprised the French in their camp and conducted several charges as the enemy retreated in disorder. The French suffered 2,600 casualties, with over 1,650 of those being captured. By contrast, the Anglo-Hanoverians suffered 186 casualties, 125 of whom were from the 15th Dragoons.

This helmet was worn by Captain George Ainslie at Emsdorf. It is made of metal and designed to provide some protection from sabre blows. It would have witnessed the 15th Dragoons break five enemy battalions, with the Anglo-Hanoverian victory being well received in Britain. Lieutenant Colonel William Erskine later presented King George III (who was also elector of Hanover) with 16 French colours captured by the regiment. The king was so pleased that he awarded the 15th Dragoons the first Battle Honour in the British Army. He also ordered that the regiment add the word 'Emsdorf' to their helmets in recognition of their courage at the battle. This was probably added to Ainslie's helmet in 1767.

This helmet is made of metal but others of its kind are known to have been made of leather

Image: National Army Museum

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

The dragoon helmet is held in the collections of the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London

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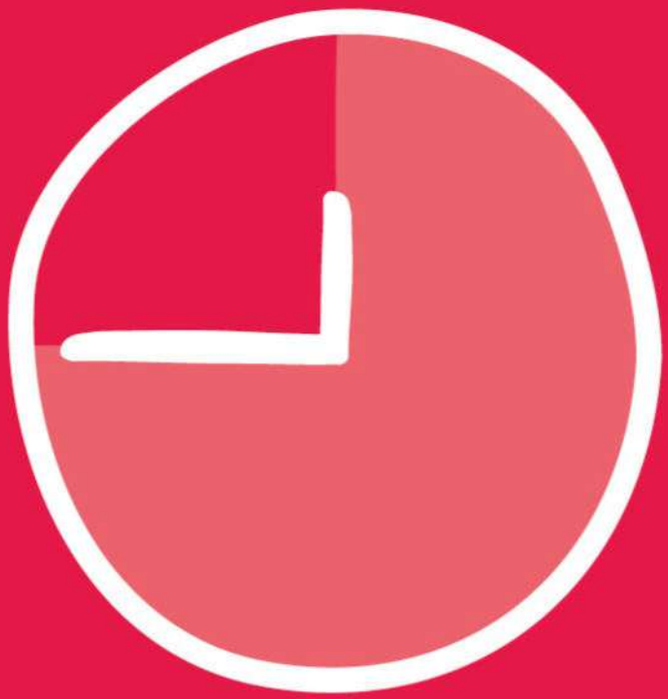

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